FOLKLORE AND FAIRY PLAYS

CHARLES BUXTON GOING

With the Compliments of

Mr. Charles Buxton Going

c/o WALTER H. BAKER COMPANY
41 WINTER STREET
BOSTON, MASS.

The
William Edward Reis
Library

Allegheny College

WITHDRAWN

8220
G56

Folklore and Fairy Plays

By
CHARLES BUXTON GOING

EGELIX-COLLEGE
MANVILLE, R.I.

BOSTON
WALTER H. BAKER COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

COPYRIGHT, 1927, BY CHARLES BUXTON GOING

Made in U. S. A.

All rights reserved

These plays are protected by copyright in all countries subscribing to the Berne Convention Act. Permission for their production must be obtained from the Walter H. Baker Company, 41 Winter Street, Boston, Mass., U. S. A., with whom all arrangements concerning royalty are to be made.

ALLEGHENY COLLEGE
LIBRARY

To the radiant memory of her
who wished that this book might be—
of her whose spirit inspired it and took
a joyous part in its making.

34157

CONTENTS

	Page
The North Wind Blowing A playlet founded on a Basque folksong.	9
Bénéad and the Moor Elves A dance-play, following a Breton legend.	16
To-morrow A play of mediæval Brittany, taken from a Breton ballad.	64
The Stones of Plouhinec Following generally the story of an old Breton *conte*.	91
A Psychotherapist Based on a Spanish so-called fairy-story.	113
The Wheel Turns Derived from the Basque ballad "Benito Zubiri."	137
The Prince with the Long Nose A comedy founded on an old French fairy-tale.	166
Grælent of Brittany A fairy play, with a plot taken from the Lai de Grælent, of the twelfth century.	199
Twilight of the Moon Produced at the theatre of the Threshold Players, New York, August, 1923.	226
A Wooing Suggested, in part, by an old Basque folk-song.	234

It is scarcely necessary to point out to producers that the settings of most of the plays in this collection may be reduced to the simplest terms, even though for literary reasons a more specialized environment for the action may be indicated in the reading version. Thus "Twilight of the Moon," "The North Wind Blowing," "A Wooing," "A Psychologist," and "Bénéad and the Moor Elves" may be given against a background of plain hangings. "To-morrow" needs little more than the suggestion of one interior and one exterior, and the actual requirements of "The Prince with the Long Nose" are but two interior sets and a few easily prepared properties. Two acts of "The Wheel Turns" are played on a stage so dark as to require no special scenery, and the indicated setting of the third act may be much simplified. The remaining two plays ("Graelent of Brittany" and "The Stones of Plouhinec") frankly demand some special effects and stage mechanism, but not more than little-theatre organizations are often ready to undertake, and find an added interest in so doing.

THE NORTH WIND BLOWING

A Playlet Founded on a Basque Folksong

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

A Maid.
An Old Nurse.
Mistress Marguerite.
Mistress Claire.
Jaurgain d'Ossa.
His Three Sons.

The time is about 1550. The action takes place in the workchamber of Mesdemoiselles Claire *and* Marguerite, *daughters of* Jaurgain d'Ossa, *in the Chateau de Tardets. It is a vaulted room with clustered pillars. There is an arched window rather high in the back wall, toward right stage, and an embroidery frame and small work-table under it.* L., *back, a prie-Dieu in front of a little shrine before which candles are burning. Further down stage,* L., *a divan with rich coverings.*

(*Discovered: the* Maid, *busying herself somewhat perfunctorily about the room. Enter the* Nurse, R.)

Maid. Is the King here?
Nurse. Not yet. He may be here at any hour.
Maid. I was not here the time he came before.
Nurse. It was not he. 'Twas but one of his lords.
Maid. 'Twas long ago?

NURSE. Three years ago he came, to bring word from his king to Jaurgain d'Ossa.

MAID. Yes, yes—I've heard. How was it that it ran? "There are two gold . . ." What was it that he said? I have forgotten.

NURSE (*ceremoniously*). "There are two golden fruits growing behind your castle walls. I would have one of them." That's Mistress Claire and Mistress Marguerite.

MAID. Ah, yes—I mind it now. And Jaurgain said, "They have not ripened yet. When they be ripe, your king shall gather one." That's Mistress Claire, who shall be queen unto the King of Hungary!

NURSE (*sighing*). That's Mistress Claire, who would be wife unto LaSalle of Brittany. . . . Hush! She comes. . . . (*Looking off.*) No—'tis Mistress Marguerite.

(*Enter* MARGUERITE, *rather brusquely. She takes her place at the embroidery frame, speaking to the servants as she sits, but not before. They curtsey at her entrance, and the* MAID *hastens to place her chair. Then both stand back.*)

MARGUERITE. My sister has not come?

NURSE and MAID (*together, curtseying*). No, Madame.

MARGUERITE (*to the* MAID). Tell her that I am here.

MAID (*curtseying*). Yes, Madame.

(*Exit* MAID, *blessing herself hastily as she passes the shrine.* NURSE *busies herself adjusting the embroidery frame, moving the work-table, etc. Enter* CLAIRE, L. *She sinks on her knees before the shrine and remains a moment in prayer, the* NURSE *stand-*

ing with bowed head and MARGUERITE *occupying herself entirely with her work meantime. The* NURSE *blesses herself as* CLAIRE *rises, and then arranges the covers as* CLAIRE *reclines on the divan. At a sign from* CLAIRE, *exit* NURSE.)

CLAIRE. I feel the breath of the wind, my sister. Is it from the north or the south that it is blowing?

MARGUERITE. I hear no sound of any wind at all.

CLAIRE. Look out of the window of the great hall, I pray you, and tell me how it is blowing.

(MARGUERITE *rises and moves off stage,* R., *returning after a moment's absence.*)

MARGUERITE (*as she enters*). There is no wind at all. The river shines as a glass, and all the trees by the chapel of Marie Madeleine are asleep.

CLAIRE. And of the King of Hungary, there is no sign?

MARGUERITE. The high-road is empty, even to the edge of the plain.

CLAIRE. But somewhere out beyond that marge, he rides this way. And soon, a little cloud of dust, whiter than the white verge beneath the sun—and then he will be here!

MARGUERITE. Rise, then, my sister—don your gown of green, and I will put my white robe on. Ride proudly when you leave your father's house, on the king's road that leads to Hungary!

CLAIRE. Rather would I ride joyous with LaSalle, by the wild seaways back to Brittany. Better the hard plank and the biting gale than any golden-saddled palfrey of the king!

MARGUERITE. I think that I should starve on those lean moors—grow wan beneath so wet and gray a sky.

CLAIRE. And I should see the moors a-flower with love, and hear the thrushes singing in the rain.

MARGUERITE. But would you not find flowers in Hungary, and birds that sing?

CLAIRE. Flowers in walled gardens; birds born in the cage!

MARGUERITE. But you would be queen.

CLAIRE. A queen that's bought is but a gaudier slave. Ah! had my mother lived, I should not now be sold, as any heifer's sold, to the first clinking purse that comes to buy! Or if the north wind blew, LaSalle would come from Brittany and with his winging sails bear me away.

MARGUERITE. Why is he not already come, and long ago?

CLAIRE. He has been to the wars, and far at sea. He did not get my word. He was away. And now for many months, no gales—naught but these baffling airs that whisper and are still. There is no wind?

MARGUERITE (*going off and returning as before*). A light air from the south that breathes upon the mirror of the stream.

CLAIRE. And did you see naught else?

MARGUERITE. Far down the road, something that moved like smoke, with now and then dull flashes back of it.

CLAIRE. The armored riders out of Hungary! Sister, my sister, go you to the door! Perchance the king is even now arrived. Tell him I cannot come. Tell him that I am ill. Tell him 'tis seven years that I have kept my bed!

MARGUERITE. But look you, Claire, I shall not be believed; and if I tell him you have kept your bed for seven years, himself will come here where you are.

CLAIRE (*covering her eyes with her hands*). I shall

not look upon it any more—this castle standing strongly in the plain—the great water of the stream on the one hand and the chapel of Marie Madeleine on the other, with the king's high-road striding through the midst. Mother, my mother! were you still in life, I should be riding homeward with LaSalle, and not to far exile in Hungary!

(*Enter* JAURGAIN D'OSSA.)

JAURGAIN (*to* CLAIRE). My daughter, you should don your robe of green. (*To* MARGUERITE.) And you, my child, go put your white robe on. The king will soon be here. [*Exit* MARGUERITE.

CLAIRE. My father, you have sold me for a price; and if I don my green and silken gown, and we together go to meet the king, thereafter you will enter here alone, your heart swollen with grief, your eyes with tears; and they will lower me into the tomb.

(*Enter* CLAIRE'S *three brothers. The two younger ones appear to confer with* JAURGAIN *in whispers. The eldest approaches* CLAIRE.)

ELDEST BROTHER. Quick, sister! You should even now be robed.

CLAIRE. My father sold me; 'tis you took the gold to build new towers and new battlements. And if I put my silken garments on, the bells of Ossa shall ring out alone—but I will not be hearing them.

SECOND BROTHER (*turning from his father and addressing* CLAIRE). My sister, soon the palfrey will be here, and I will hold the stirrup while you mount.

CLAIRE. The saddle of my palfrey is of gold! Give me your hand; 'tis time I should begin.

(*He gives her his hand and she rises slowly.*)

YOUNGEST BROTHER (*impetuously*). My sister, I will ride away with you!

CLAIRE (*shaking her head slowly*). You will not ride to-day where I shall ride. [*Exit* CLAIRE, L.

(*Sounds of trumpets are heard outside.*)

JAURGAIN and the three BROTHERS (*excitedly*). The king! The king is here!

[*Exeunt* JAURGAIN *and the three* BROTHERS, R.

(*Enter* MARGUERITE, *robed in white. She crosses stage, looks off* R., *returns and paces restlessly, looking and listening,* L. *Enter* CLAIRE, L., *gazing fixedly in front of her. She approaches the divan somewhat gropingly and sinks back on it.* MARGUERITE, *after regarding her anxiously, moves to extreme* R. *stage and stands there, sometimes looking off and sometimes looking back at* CLAIRE. *A great bell begins to toll slowly.*)

CLAIRE (*monotonously*). The bells of Ossa now shall ring alone! (*In a strained voice.*) You see the king?

MARGUERITE. I do not see the king. I see folk coming all across the plain.

CLAIRE. Are they in bridal garments?

MARGUERITE. They are robed in black.

ELDEST BROTHER (*entering suddenly,* R.). Who bade the great bell toll? 'Tis the carillon should ring! [*Exit as hastily as he came.*

CLAIRE (*sitting up and speaking in a strained voice*). The saddle of the horse I ride, you say, is gold?

ELDEST BROTHER (*reëntering, alarmed*). The belfry's empty! No one mans the rope, and still the bell tolls on!

(*He stops, startled, looking at* CLAIRE, *and moves slowly toward her.*)

CLAIRE (*more faintly*). Look once again, my sister —look again, and see which way the wind is blowing. (MARGUERITE *starts off stage,* R., *but stops and like her brother moves slowly toward* CLAIRE. CLAIRE *continues, but still more faintly.*) If from the north . . . say to LaSalle . . . to come and find . . . my body!

(*She falls forward, but her brother catches her and lays her back on the divan; as he does so, the sound of the wind is heard—a sort of long sighing—and the voice of the* NURSE *comes from off stage,* R., *as she enters, speaking eagerly.*)

NURSE. Mistress Claire! Mistress Claire! It is the north wind that is blowing!

(*She catches sight of the figure on the bed and puts her hand over her mouth; then falls on her knees, making the sign of the cross.*)

CURTAIN

BENEAD AND THE MOOR ELVES

Based on the story called "Les Korils de Plaudren," told by the Miller of Vannes, in Emile Souvestre's "Le Foyer Breton," (W. Coquebert, Paris, 1840). Souvestre makes his acknowledgments to M. Corentin's "Revue de Bretagne," of 1834.

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

BÉNÉAD GUILCHER, *a hunchback, later cured of his deformity.*
TINAH, *his wife.*
PERR BALIBOUZIK, *a red-headed and stuttering miser.*
LEADER OF THE MOOR-ELVES.
MOOR-ELVES, *or "korils."*
THREE BRETON PEASANT WOMEN.

[NOTE. *The transformation undergone by* BÉNÉAD *at the end of the second scene is so great that it may be convenient to have the part played thereafter by another person. In the Breton story the korils are dwarfs, and toward the close of* SCENE 6 *they swarm in great numbers, but literal fulfilment of these conditions is not necessary to the play. In this sixth scene, if not throughout, they must carry little canvas bags or wallets, hung over their shoulders or around their waists.*]

The action is supposed to take place near Loqueltas, in southwestern Brittany, during the sixteenth century. The alternating sets may be the simplest of backgrounds, or drops, suggesting in one case the door-

yard of a peasant cottage and in the other a stretch of heath in which stands a group of the great Druidic stones called menhirs. In the former setting, a part or end only of the cottage may be represented, the rest apparently extending off stage, so that TINAH *may "go in and out" when the action requires by leaving and reëntering the stage at that side, without passing through any door visible to the audience.*

SCENE 1

Outside BÉNÉAD'S *cottage. There is a crude bench, and a little up stage from it, out of the way, some kind of large tub, perhaps made by cutting down a cask.*

(*Discovered:* BÉNÉAD *and* TINAH, *seated on the bench. He is humpbacked and ugly. Both are poorly dressed, but with an effort at decency. She is drawing copper coins from a worn stocking and counting them into* BÉNÉAD'S *cap, which he clutches in both hands.*)

TINAH (*rubbing each coin between thumb and forefinger as she slowly drops it into the cap*). . . . three, four, five, six, *seven*. . . . There! See—'tis as I said. Just forty sous and seven deniers.

BÉNÉAD (*scratching his head*). But I was sure that there were eight!

TINAH (*impatiently*). Saint Anne! Three times it counts the same! And if there had been eight? We need another twenty sous, lacking these deniers, to make *one* crown—just *one*—and we are owing *five*—five crowns! And Perr Balibouzik, he wants it all! Ah, Mary Virgin!

BÉNÉAD. He wants—he wants—he wants! What

use for him to want what he can't get? It is not there! (*Indicating the cap on his knee.*)

TINAH. Goa! And can't he take the furniture, the tools, the pig?

BÉNÉAD (*startled*). Jésus Marie! Well, we must pay him what we can, and make him wait a little longer for the rest.

TINAH. Help us Saint Anne! Yes—pay him what we have, and let the usury he takes upon the rest eat up the forty sous, and leave the same five crowns still owing! We only borrowed three, and now 'tis five, and soon it will be seven . . .

BÉNÉAD. Ay, ay! It grows and mounts!

TINAH. And we . . .

(*She drops her shoulders and hands in a gesture of complete discouragement. Then she mechanically takes up her knitting and begins to work on it.*)

BÉNÉAD. If I were only straight and tall . . . (TINAH *glances at him and goes on with her work.* BÉNÉAD *resumes after a pause.*) but now, 'tis always "Bénéad the hunchback," "Bénéad the hunchback," or oftener just "the hunchback"—that's what sticks in all their minds; the hump is what they think of, not the man.

TINAH. Now . . . now!

BÉNÉAD. What use to be an honest workman? I am never treated like the rest. Still they laugh and banter—"watch the little hunchback!"—as if I were a dog that's learned to do a trick!

TINAH. Not the village folk. They do not mock you.

BÉNÉAD. But all the village folk are just as poor as we are, while the rich ones, who have places that are worth while—they do not want me 'round.

TINAH. Ah! Don't you know how often they speak kindly to you?

BÉNÉAD. They throw their kindness at me as they throw the dog a bone, without a scrap of meat on it. One can't live just on kindness! (*After a pause, dreamily.*) If I were only straight and tall!

TINAH (*a little impatiently*). Ah! now, what use . . .

BÉNÉAD. I'd earn money fast enough.

TINAH. Oh—would you? How would you earn it?

BÉNÉAD. At harvesting . . . or . . . or . . . the lord might take me as a gardener . . . or in his train, to wear a uniform, with red and blue . . . or I might be a beadle, with a great cocked hat . . .

TINAH (*breaking in*). Ah! Ah! If you were this or you were that! And if you were squint-eyed and stuttering, you might yourself be Perr Balibouzik, taking the usury instead of paying it! *Pretty* is not *rich*, poor imbecile!

BÉNÉAD. I might be Perr! And what is Perr? A man who never laughs and never sings, an evil Christian and a miser who eats naught but bran bread in which one even sees the straw . . .

TINAH (*breaking in*). Because he wants to, not because he has to, while for us . . .

BÉNÉAD (*breaking in*). He sweats blood when he has to spend a denier—and with that, I seem to smell his coat already scorching in the fires of purgatory!

TINAH. Ayo! But he can buy the masses to put out those fires, while for us . . . (*Sighing.*)

BÉNÉAD. Yes—he can buy the masses . . . buy them with our five crowns!

TINAH. Ah, well! That is a reckoning Perr will have to settle with the good vicar and the Three Persons. It's not for us; it is not for to-day. But now,

those five crowns; that is what we must think about. And what about them?

BÉNÉAD. Why . . . (*Vaguely.*) we must see what we can sell—or maybe borrow, here and there . . .

TINAH. But where? But where? But where can we get anything? There's not a Christian in the parish we could go to.

BÉNÉAD. No. The better Christians that they are, the less they have . . . and when you think of all the treasure that is hid in Brittany! If we could only find some! (*A more definite thought seems to shape itself in his mind.*) I wonder . . . perhaps those moor elves . . . if perhaps we might . . .

TINAH (*crossing herself, hastily*). Ah, Jésus Marie! the korils! traffic with them? You talk of Perr's coat scorching! Whatever are you thinking of?

BÉNÉAD. Nothing to hurt my soul, you may be sure. Besides, there is no danger. It's not like dealing with the Mocking Serpent. They are not his imps.

TINAH. No—but they are not Christian folk.

BÉNÉAD. Perhaps; neither are half the folk one deals with in the market.

TINAH. Nevertheless . . .

BÉNÉAD (*breaking in*). You know that night we met them on the moors—the night when they were dancing all around us? Well—nothing evil followed.

TINAH (*crossing herself again*). No—but that was different. We hadn't gone to seek them—we just came upon them—and we were in a state of grace. And even then . . . if you hadn't had the plough-fork . . .

BÉNÉAD (*interrupting*). But I could go again there in a state of grace, and take the plough-fork . . . (*He stops abruptly, startled by a thought that has just occurred to him, and resumes with increasing excite-*

ment.) The plough-fork! No one ever knew before that night it was a charm against the korils! We learned it only from their song! (*He picks up the fork —a two-pronged affair for cleaning the ploughshare— and holds it aloft.*) You hold it this way, with the two points up, giving the good God his two shares and Old William one, and no harm can come to you! And since we knew that, all the world can cross the moors in safety, even between midnight and cockcrow. Don't you see?

TINAH. See what—don't I see what?

BÉNÉAD. It must have been Saint Anne who made them teach us that!

TINAH (*doubtfully*). E-r-r-r-r . . .

BÉNÉAD. And if she did, she might have other ways to make them help us.

TINAH. And on the other hand, she might be angry, when she had guarded you that time, if you should go poking your nose back there again.

BÉNÉAD. Not good Saint Anne. Saint Anne is never angry with the Bretons.

TINAH. But Perr's a Breton, too; so why should she interfere?

BÉNÉAD. He's not a good one—and anyway she . . . without harming Perr . . . might make things evener, you know . . . why, don't you know when Peter cursed our moors with thorns because the bushes tore his cloak, she made her grandson give the gorse its golden blossoms as an offset? And when the old saint cursed the lark that flew up in his face, and told it it must always nest among the thorns, she went to Mary's Son again about it; and He said, "Granny, what is there to do? When Peter says a thing, not even I have power to unsay it." And so she said, "Then give the lark a gift of song." And now the lark flies

up to heaven every day to sing his matins. So now when Perr has . . . why wouldn't she . . . and we would pay the rector to say fifty masses—fifty, at ten white sous each mass, to sing for us in heaven like the lark. . . .

TINAH (*turning the stocking over and over mechanically in her hands*). Well . . . well . . . (*Her eyes become fixed as she feels a fold in the toe of the stocking, at first incredulously, then excitedly, then thrusts her hand in and sits a second or two motionless.*) Mary Virgin!

BÉNÉAD. What? . . . What is it?

TINAH (*bewildered, drawing out another coin*). Another denier!

BÉNÉAD (*exultingly*). What did I tell you? There *were* eight!

TINAH (*looking at the coin, dumbfounded*). Mary Virgin!

BÉNÉAD. See? See? Already! Good Saint Anne!

TINAH. Another denier! And I was so *sure* . . .

BÉNÉAD. Saint Anne has sent a sign!

TINAH. Then you really think . . .

BÉNÉAD. Think? Think? Of course I think! See: . . . you shall take this denier for a candle at her shrine, to burn while I . . . to burn to-night . . .

TINAH (*frightened*). *To-night?*

BÉNÉAD (*happily excited*). To-night! To-night! (*He goes on with increasing eagerness and excitement.*) Come—give me that denier—let me hold it while you put the rest away and hide the stocking. (*She hands him the coin and nervously pours the rest back, tying the leg of the stocking above them.*) Come—there is time yet for the second mass! (*He stumps to and fro, waving his hands as he talks.*) I will confess, and I will take the fork and sprinkle it with holy water, just

to be more sure . . . and you shall keep this blessed denier, and buy a candle for the shrine of good Saint Anne; and this evening, after vespers, light it, and while it burns . . . Who knows? . . . Who knows what they might do if . . . and if Saint Anne . . . and, at any rate . . . Come, hurry—hurry—put away the money—there go the bells. . .

(*The church bells are heard as he hurries her off.*)

CURTAIN

END OF SCENE 1

SCENE 2

The same night. The moor of Plaudren. A dolmen or a group of menhirs in the background. Strong moonlight.

(*Discovered: the* MOOR ELVES [*or* KORILS] *dancing silently or to a rhythm hummed by one of their number. The dance may continue at will, but it stops suddenly as the* LEADER, *breaking from the group, runs to the side and looks off.*)

LEADER OF THE KORILS (*pointing off*). Ha! Ha! Ha!

(*The others, crouching, run toward him, crowding and milling about like a flock of little animals.*)

ALL THE KORILS. Ha! Ha! Ha! Who comes? Who comes?

LEADER (*peering intently*). 'Tis Bénéad Guilcher, bearing the plough-fork!

ALL THE KORILS (*in chorus*).

Fork of plough in hand hath he,
Leave him, leave him, let him be!
Let him dance, or let him stand,
With the plough-fork in his hand.
Bénéad Guilcher! Bénéad Guilcher!

(*Enter* BÉNÉAD, *with an air of bravado.*)

BÉNÉAD. Well, well, well, my little gentlemen! So here I am!

LEADER. So here you are, and here are we. And where may you be going now, good Bénéad?

BÉNÉAD. Nowhere, my little gentlemen, nowhere but here. I came to visit you, my little neighbors. Just a little friendly call. Just for the pleasure of a visit with you.

ALL THE KORILS (*in chorus*). Welcome, Bénéad! Welcome, neighbor! Now will you dance with us? Now will you dance with us?

(*They skip about fantastically repeating, "Now will you dance with us? Now will you dance with us?"*)

BÉNÉAD (*when they pause, clustering about him*). Ah! as to that, I fear you must excuse me, little gentlemen. My breath is all too short—or yours too long for this poor cripple.

LEADER. But see, good Bénéad—just join us in a little dance of friendship, and we will stop whenever you grow tired.

BÉNÉAD (*hesitating*). Faith! I would like to try a round with you, to see the way it goes.

LEADER. Then join us—join us!

ALL THE KORILS (*skipping about*). Bénéad, dance

with us! Bénéad, dance with us! Bénéad, dance with us—dance with us now!

BÉNÉAD. And will you promise me to stop?

ALL THE KORILS. We promise, promise, promise! We promise, Bénéad!

BÉNÉAD. Upon the Saviour's cross?

ALL THE KORILS. Upon the Saviour's cross!

BÉNÉAD (*tucking the plough-fork into his girdle*). Come, then! (*He takes his place in the circle and they begin a more formal dance, at first with a mere hummed accompaniment, but soon with a recurring theme built upon a four-line stanza to which however they sing only "Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday" over and over, ad lib.* BÉNÉAD, *stopping.*) With all respect to you, my little gentlemen, your dance and song both seem to me to lack variety.

ALL THE KORILS (*excitedly*). Ah! Ah! Ah!

BÉNÉAD (*with more assurance*). Yes. You stop too early in the week; and though I am no clever rhymer, it seems to me I could add something to it.

ALL THE KORILS. Ah! Ah! Ah! Let's hear you do it! Let's hear you do it!

BÉNÉAD. Ahem! Ahem! Let's see. . . . Ahem!

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday,
Thursday, Friday, Saturday,

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday,
Thursday, Friday, Saturday!

ALL THE KORILS (*delightedly*). Stard! Stard! Do it again! Do it again, good Bénéad, do it again!

BÉNÉAD (*singing the theme again*). Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday!

(*They all join in an excited dance, repeating the theme over and over.* BÉNÉAD *presently drops out, and stands aside, panting. The* KORILS, *finishing with a grand whirl, cluster about him, shouting.*)

ALL THE KORILS. A wish—a wish—make us a wish, Bénéad, make us a wish!

BÉNÉAD. A wish?

LEADER. Yes—make us a wish, so we can give it you. What will you have—riches? Or maybe beauty?

BÉNÉAD. But are you serious, my little gentleman?

LEADER. May we be damned to gather, grain by grain, all of the millet in the bishopric if we deceive you, Bénéad.

BÉNÉAD. And you will make a gift . . .

ALL THE KORILS. We will! We will!

BÉNÉAD. And I can choose . . .

ALL THE KORILS. Riches or beauty—riches or beauty—riches or beauty—which shall it be?

LEADER. What would you have, good Bénéad? Money, to buy men's flattery of the hunchback? Or would you be straight and tall and handsome?

BÉNÉAD (*passionately*). Ah, yes—yes—that! So they shall never call me "hunchback" any more! Straight and tall and fair—straight as the staff that floats the seigneur's banner at Loqueltas!

LEADER. Right! Right! You shall be, Bénéad, you shall be straight and tall and handsome. Come, little comrades, come!

(*The* KORILS *surround* BÉNÉAD *in a ring, beginning a dance to a new rhythm.*)

ALL THE KORILS (*as they dance*). Off with it, way

with it, in with it, down with it; bid it begone, bid it away. Bénéad handsome and Bénéad tall! Bénéad, Bénéad, Bénéad! (*Ad lib.*)

(*They break their circle and rush at* BÉNÉAD, *playfully jostling him and slapping his back as they gradually push him toward the side of the stage, repeating the song in accelerating tempo and ending in a prolonged and confused "Ah! Ah! Ah!" as all join in a sort of scrimmage, partly out of sight of the audience. The old* BÉNÉAD *slips off and the new one takes his place, emerging from the group and crossing slowly toward* C. *stage. He is so transformed that in the phrasing of the Breton story "except one were his mother, one would no longer have recognized him." He has an air of bewilderment and amazement, moving uncertainly, looking himself up and down, passing his hands over his body, feeling back between his shoulders, etc. During this action the* KORILS *withdraw, little by little, watching him.*)

BÉNÉAD (*half to himself*). Saint Anne and Mary Virgin! (*He thrusts his hands into his pockets, still looking down at himself in a dazed way, contemplating his straightened figure first on one side and then on the other. The* KORILS *slip off silently, leaving him alone. He withdraws his hands, turning the empty pockets inside out as he does so. With an air of suddenly coming to.*) Jésus Marie! I had forgotten all about the crowns! (*Looking about, startled to find himself alone.*) Oh, little gentlemen! Oh, little gentlemen! (*He takes one or two quick steps as if to follow them off.*) Oh, little gentlemen! (*He stops short, turns, and as the curtain begins to descend he slaps his chest with*

both hands and throws out his arms.) Five crowns! Five crowns, instead of *this?* Oh, Tinah! Tinah!

[*Exit* Bénéad, *running exultantly.*

CURTAIN

End of Scene 2

SCENE 3

Two days later. Outside Bénéad's *cottage, morning.*

(*Discovered:* Bénéad *and* Tinah. *She is just entering with a shallow basket of old stockings and darning wool; she pauses for an instant, glancing back over her shoulder, then seats herself on the bench and begins to sort over the stuff, unraveling bits and balling the yarn or beginning to darn a hole.* Bénéad, *who has been sitting with his elbows on his knees looking about dreamily, gets up, stretches, and moves to and fro aimlessly, looking himself up and down with a self-conscious air. When his back is turned* Tinah *pauses and looks at him with a mixture of admiration and uneasiness. She turns and looks off again more fixedly as a babble of voices is heard on that side.*)

Tinah. Here come some more of them.

Bénéad (*falling into a pose*). Eh?

Tinah (*still looking off*). 'Tis Bellah Postik and Barbarik Riou, from Vannes . . . and there's a third I do not know . . . she'll be from Vannes, too—or maybe farther off.

Bénéad (*trying another pose*). The news is flying over all the world. There'll be great talk of it in Paris, now, no doubt.

TINAH (*glancing at him and sniffing, half-grumblingly*). Ay? 'Twould be no harm if there were less talk of it, I'm thinking, there or here! (*With evident satisfaction, as the callers enter.*) Good day to you, neighbors!

(*Enter three old* PEASANT WOMEN. *They stop, stupefied, staring at* BÉNÉAD *and crossing themselves.*)

FIRST OLD WOMAN. Lord—Lord!

SECOND OLD WOMAN. Jésus and Mary Virgin!

THIRD OLD WOMAN (*pointing*). Not him you meant —not that one? That one was a hunchback?

BÉNÉAD. Yes, yes, good woman, and God bless you! This one—Bénéad. Bénéad, who was called a hunchback.

FIRST OLD WOMAN. A-h-h-h-h! 'tis some trick!

SECOND OLD WOMAN. Without his mother said so, I will not believe 'tis he!

TINAH (*sharply*). And would his mother know him more than me?

THIRD OLD WOMAN. Ay, she should know; his wife should know, if anyone.

SECOND OLD WOMAN. Oh, you! You have not seen him going 'round the way he was—and now . . .

BÉNÉAD (*to* SECOND OLD WOMAN, *mischievously*). D'ye mind the time I met you cutting wood behind the towers of Plaudren, Barbarik Riou, and helped you get the faggots on your head? 'Twas on the seigneur's land, and you were tangled in the hedge; and if you had been caught . . .

SECOND OLD WOMAN (*hastily cutting him off*). Jésus my Lord! Bénéad big-mouth, will you hold your tongue? (*Sulkily.*) I know you well enough, that's sure!

BÉNÉAD (*good-naturedly*). There, there, Barbarik, don't mind a little joke! No harm to gather up a stick or two. Who doesn't, when he can? (*To* FIRST OLD WOMAN.) And look here, Bellah Postik—when your little cow—the little red one—was having her first calf, do you remember how I happened in, and you said 'twas Saint Anne that must have sent me, for the cry you made to her had scarcely died away?

FIRST OLD WOMAN. Ayol! 'Tis surely you!

TINAH (*exultantly*). You see? (*Confidentially.*) Why, first, I'll tell you, I was like you, too. But then he told me all was in the credence—just how many skirts I had, and what they were, and then the color of my stockings . . .

BÉNÉAD (*breaking in*). And how she'd darned a gray one with black wool, and how the other was not darned at all . . . see . . .

(*He makes a feint of lifting her skirt.*)

TINAH (*shrilly, dodging away*). Will you be still, you stupid? 'Tis a pity they did naught to straighten out your manners when they did your back!

(*The* THREE OLD WOMEN *speak almost at the same time.*)

FIRST OLD WOMAN. How did it happen?

SECOND OLD WOMAN. Tell us all about it! Tell us all about it!

THIRD OLD WOMAN. "They?" Who were *they?*

TINAH (*embarrassed*). Why . . . ask him. I wasn't there. Tell them about it, Bénéad.

THREE OLD WOMEN (*all speaking together*). Yes, yes, yes! Tell us! Tell us!

BÉNÉAD. Ah . . . well . . . well . . .

there it is, you see. There's really nothing I can tell. You see . . . I fell asleep, you see, out there upon the moors (*With a vague gesture.*) . . . and then I had some kind of dream, you know . . . and then I woke up this way.

First Old Woman. Madame Virgin.

Second Old Woman. Tck! Tck! Tck!

Third Old Woman. But didn't you see any lights —hear any voices—anything?

Bénéad (*somewhat confused*). Why . . . as to that . . . why . . . maybe there were voices, or . . . (*Impatiently.*) I tell you that I was asleep. There was a dream . . . I can't remember any more than what I tell you!

Third Old Woman. But surely, if you tried . . .

First Old Woman (*interrupting*). Where was it, Bénéad, you fell asleep?

Bénéad (*with another vague gesture*). Oh, out there on the moors, toward Plaudren.

First Old Woman. Near the Christ, there, at the cross-roads?

Bénéad. Er . . . yes—near there.

Second Old Woman. That's what everyone has heard. But Peronnik the cripple and Tonyk who is paralyzed and Mao with the twisted arm have slept there night and day, and come back only worse for all their pains.

Bénéad (*quickly*). They didn't . . . (*Checking himself.*) I mean, it didn't ever happen me before, though I have often slept out on the moors.

Third Old Woman. Tinah said "they" did it. What does she mean by "they"? Who were *they*, Tinah?

Tinah (*frightened*). Oh—I . . . I don't know! . . . nothing . . . it was just a way of speak-

ing that slipped out. . . . I just meant it was done somehow—that's all!

First Old Woman. It wouldn't be the Three Persons, do you think? You don't mean Them?

Tinah (*shocked*). Oh, no! no! no!

Second Old Woman. No, no! not Them. Not even God the Father would be bothered with such little things.

Third Old Woman. Ah, no indeed! Why, don't you know when even good Saint Kado wished to have a bridge across the Entel River, so the faithful wouldn't need a boat to cross to him, he went to Madame Virgin with his prayer, and she told him such a thing was not a woman's business, and he must talk it over with the Trinity? And he stood very well with Them, too, mind you! But still, They told him that the saints in Brittany were ruining Them already with so many miracles, and all the angels They might otherwise have put upon the job were busy somewhere else. Ah, no; it couldn't have been Them.

First Old Woman (*argumentatively*). Well now, it might have been one of those same angels, on his way to work, or coming back, and seeing Bénéad, you know . . .

Bénéad. You may be sure of one thing . . . the Angel with the Horns, he didn't do it. It was not Old William.

First Old Woman. That's sure enough! Old William doesn't go about doing men good.

Third Old Woman. Eh, well . . . even at that, one must not be too sure. The serpent is not wise for nothing, Bellah. You know the time he made the trade with Mary's Son at Konkored—gave Him a sack all full of souls for one day's freedom on the earth—and in that day he caught the only Christians in the parish,

just by enriching them? Don't you know he said to Jésus, "You told me that I must not torment them, and I didn't. Let this be a lesson to you, Nazarene: You'll know another time that when you want to make men wicked, there's one way that is surer than to send them sorrows—and that is to give them riches."

(BÉNÉAD *absent-mindedly picks up the plough-fork and fingers it, presently laying it aside again.*)

TINAH (*quickly, to the* THIRD OLD WOMAN). But it hasn't made us rich! That's just what I've been telling Bénéad. Why didn't he, instead . . .

(TINAH *stops abruptly as a loud angry voice is heard off stage at a little distance. All start and look in that direction, and* BÉNÉAD *seizes the chance to make a hasty and emphatic gesture to* TINAH *to be silent.*)

FIRST OLD WOMAN. Goa! 'Tis Perr Balibouzik. I owe him fifty sous, and I don't want to hear him tell me so! Come—come—let's go before he gets here! Good day to you! Good day!

(*Exit the* THREE OLD WOMEN *in a babel of "good-days."*)

BÉNÉAD (*irritably, to* TINAH). Now who's the big-mouth? Mary Virgin! you had almost said it!

TINAH. And some day I will—or you'll say it, surely. Why don't you tell the way it really happened, since you say it was no harm?

BÉNÉAD. And have the whole world think I'm hand-in-glove with all the korils, and every neighbor coming

after me each time they lose a heifer, or a goat is gone astray, expecting me to find it for them and grumbling at me if I don't? God knows what else they'd ask, pestering night and day. We'd have no peace at all. But hush now; here comes Perr. (*Enter* PERR BALIBOUZIK. TINAH *slips away.* BÉNÉAD, *nervously.*) Good-morning, Perr; good-morning!

PERR (*grunting ungraciously*). Huh! Look here, my f-f-friend, there's something more about this business than you've told me. I've come to g-g-get it out of you.

BÉNÉAD. What do you mean? I've told you all that I've told anybody.

PERR. A-h-h-h-h! That may do for them, but not for me!

BÉNÉAD. But what can I do more?

PERR. What can you do more? I'll t-t-tell you what you can do more! (*Striking the palm of his left hand with the fingers of his right.*) P-p-pay me the five crowns you owe me! That's one thing you can do m-m-more!

BÉNÉAD. I tell you that I have not got them—now. Give me a little time.

PERR. If you can d-d-dream your hump away out yonder on the moors, you could have d-d-dreamed five crowns into your hand, and f-f-found them there when you awakened! Come; p-p-pay me! Or else . . . (*Significantly.*)

BÉNÉAD (*anxiously*). Or else what, Perr? Or else what?

PERR (*craftily*). Oh, you know well enough! You put me in the way of getting s-s-something where you got your s-s-straight back. I'll bring home s-s-something better worth the while, I'll w-w-warrant you!

BÉNÉAD (*hesitantly*). Well . . . if I could re-

member more about it . . . if I could tell you, maybe, something you could do . . . a chance to get some gift, perhaps . . . I don't know . . . Maybe . . .

PERR. Well, well, c-c-come on, then! If it's worth while, I'll g-g-give you time to pay me.

BÉNÉAD. But really, Perr . . . I don't know, really . . .

PERR (*brusquely*). You d-d-don't! Well, then, let's see what furniture you have. Where is the p-p-pig?

BÉNÉAD. Wait! Wait! Sit down a minute, Perr—sit down. I'll tell you all I can. But then you'll give me time to pay you?

PERR. Yes, yes, I'll g-g-give you time. If it is really worth the while, I'll g-g-give you time. It all depends. G-g-go on.

BÉNÉAD. And you'll not spread the news around?

PERR. Not likely, if it's any value!

BÉNÉAD. Well, you see—one night, some time ago, Tinah and I were coming home across the moors, at Plaudren, and we met the korils. I was frightened first—terribly frightened. Then I found, quite accidentally, that if I held the plough-fork—I forgot to tell you I was carrying the plough-fork—that if I held it up like this (*He picks up the fork and illustrates.*) it was a charm, and I was safe—anyone was safe.

(*He keeps the fork in his hands, fingering it absent-mindedly, in the following scene.*)

PERR (*impatiently*). Yes, yes—I've heard all this. Wh-wh-why—everyone knows this!

BÉNÉAD. Yes, but . . . well, you see . . . I thought the other night I might go out again, taking

the plough-fork . . . make friends, you know, and see if there was anything that they could do . . .

PERR. C-c-could do? What do you mean, that they could do?

BÉNÉAD. Could do for me—could give me, don't you know?

PERR. Oh! W-w-well?

BÉNÉAD. Well, they were dancing . . . and we said good-evening, and . . . they were dancing, and they asked me to join. I was afraid, but they said they'd stop when I got tired, and so . . . they were dancing, and they had a song that went "Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday," over and over . . . just like that—"Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday" . . .

PERR. Well—then?

BÉNÉAD. Why, by and by we stopped, and then, to make variety, I added "Thursday, Friday, Saturday," and they were so pleased they offered me a gift.

PERR. And all you'd done was add a f-f-few words to their song?

BÉNÉAD. Yes—that was all I did.

PERR. And then they said they'd straighten out your back, just as a g-g-gift?

BÉNÉAD. Oh . . . why . . . they gave me a choice.

PERR (*contemptuously, pointing at him*). And you took *that?* What else could you have had?

BÉNÉAD. Why, you see, they said—the leader said —"What will you have, riches or beauty? Would you be straight and tall and handsome?" And it seemed to me as if, all of a sudden, I could hear a thousand jeering voices—all the voices that have ever mocked at me in all the years, crying around me, "Bénéad *hunchback*, Bénéad *hunchback*, Bénéad *hunchback*, *hunchback!*" And before I thought, I cried, "Yes! yes!

That! Let me be straight and tall—straight as the staff that bears the seigneur's banner at Loqueltas!" And then I had no further time to think; they did some magic over me with singing and with making passes—and then I found myself like this.

PERR. *Riches!* And you c-c-came away and left the r-r-riches there?

BÉNÉAD. But I left the hump!

PERR. And you could have had the riches, just for adding something to their s-s-song?

BÉNÉAD. They offered them, I tell you.

PERR (*addressing the world at large in a sort of fury of covetousness, and in his most excited moments overcoming his stutter*). Left the riches when he could have had them for the asking! Left them and came away!

BÉNÉAD (*stretching proudly*). Like this!

PERR. Like *that!* Like *that!* The devil fly away with such an imbecile! What's *that* (*Pointing contemptuously.*) against the riches that you left? If you were rich enough, you fool, who'd care if you were crooked as a spider?

BÉNÉAD. *I* would.

PERR. Oh, you—*you!* No wonder you're so poor—and always will be! I ought to make you p-p-pay me on the nail.

BÉNÉAD (*anxiously*). You said you'd give me time.

PERR (*eyeing the plough-fork*). Yes . . . well . . . (*To himself.*) Fools sometimes point the way to wiser men. . . . (*To* BÉNÉAD.) They must have riches, since they offered them?

BÉNÉAD. The korils? Why, all the world knows they are rich!

PERR (*rather too carelessly*). How did that s-s-song go? T-t-tell me again.

BÉNÉAD.

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday,
Thursday, Friday, Saturday.

(*He sings it.*)

PERR (*stretching out his hand*). Let me see the plough-fork! (*He takes it and turns it around with an affectation of indifferent curiosity.*) So—that's the way you held it? Like that—eh? (*He hums the air of the song; lets his hand fall but still keeps the plough-fork.*) H'mmmmm! (*More briskly.*) Well, I must be going. I've got a lot of money to c-c-collect this morning. But I'll give you time. Since I promised, Bénéad, f-f-fool that you are, I'll g-g-give you time. (*Starts off.*)

BÉNÉAD. Yes . . . but, Perr, give me back my plough-fork.

PERR. The plough-fork? (*Feigning surprise to see that he still has it.*) Oh! (*With abrupt change to a hard manner.*) No. If I give you time, I need a p-p-pledge. I'll keep the plough-fork till you pay me, as a p-p-pledge. I need a p-p-pledge.

(*He goes off muttering, repeating his last words.* TINAH *reënters as soon as he is gone.* BÉNÉAD *looks at her uneasily.*)

TINAH (*with displeasure*). Well . . . what about it now?

BÉNÉAD. Well . . . he says he'll give me time.

TINAH. I heard that. I heard what he said. But how much time? And where will we get five crowns? And he may change his mind. And anyway—five crowns! Where will you get them?

BÉNÉAD. Why . . . I don't know, just now . . . I'll have to look around.

TINAH. You'll look a long way 'round before you see five crowns—I'll tell you that! Five crowns don't grow on every bush! How long is it since you have seen five crowns?

BÉNÉAD. No . . . but then, you see, I'm different now!

TINAH. Lord Jésus! That is all you think about—your being different! Why couldn't you have been made different and still have five crowns besides?

BÉNÉAD. Well . . . just . . . I didn't think of it. You wouldn't, either, if you'd been as I was . . . if you knew the way it felt to be like that.

TINAH. Didn't I marry you when you were like that?

BÉNÉAD. Yes—but you know what people said to you—and said about you?

TINAH (*furious at the memory*). A-h-h-h-h! the bigmouths! (*Looking at* BÉNÉAD *and melting into self-satisfaction as she realizes his good looks.*) Well . . . now at least they can't say . . . what they said. (*Sighing.*) If we only had the money to pay Perr! (*They both seem to be thinking.* TINAH *starts as an idea comes to her.*) Bénéad! Since you're such friends with them . . . couldn't you go back? Not ask too much, you know, but just a little? Wouldn't they . . .

BÉNÉAD. Ayol! That might do . . . (*He looks around mechanically for the plough-fork, then suddenly slaps his hands against his sides with a gesture of distress.*) Blood of the devil!

TINAH (*catching his tone of troubled excitement*). What? What is it?

BÉNÉAD. Perr has the plough-fork!

TINAH (*sinking back on the bench*). Mary Virgin!

That's what he took it for! Bénéad! Don't you see? Perr is going to-night—he's going to get those riches for himself!

BÉNÉAD. He is . . . that's what he is! Jésus Marie! Jésus Marie!

CURTAIN

END OF SCENE 3

SCENE 4

The same night. The KORILS' *heath, moonlight, as in* SCENE 2. *A strain of dance music (or dance song), abruptly stopped, is heard just before the curtain rises.*

(*Discovered:* PERR, *seated, rubbing his head and passing his hand across his brow nervously. The* KORILS *are swarming about him, touching one another and pointing at him with displeasure. There is a confusion of voices shouting.*)

ALL THE KORILS. Ah ah ah ah! Ay ay ay ay! He stopped our dance! He stopped our dance!

LEADER OF THE KORILS (*holding up his hand for silence*). Why did you stop us, Perr? We had just begun to dance.

PERR (*peevishly*). You said you'd stop. You p-p-promised it. You stopped for Gu-Gu-Guilcher when he asked you.

LEADER. Ah, yes—but then, he let us dance before he asked. And you cried "Stop!" almost before we had begun.

PERR (*sulkily*). That's not the dance I want to dance.

LEADER. Oh! That's the way it is! Then what do you want to dance?

ALL THE KORILS (*rhythmically, with a little dance step*). Come, Perr! Come, Perr! What is the dance you want to dance? Come, Perr! Come, Perr! What is the dance you want, man? (*Ad lib.*)

PERR (*raising his voice*). How can I t-t-tell you when you don't wa-wa-wait for an answer?

(*The* KORILS *circle around him at top speed with a prolonged "Wh-o-o-o-o-e-e-e!" rising to fortissimo and then diminishing like the whistle of the wind, dying to a whisper as they come to rest.*)

LEADER. We'll wait, then, for the answer. What is it, Perr?

PERR. I want that one about the days, you know—the one you d-d-danced with Gu-Gu-Guilcher.

ALL THE KORILS (*skipping around him with steps that leap higher and higher as their voices rise on a gradual crescendo*). Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! He wants the one about the days! He wants the one about the days! He wants the one about the days—the one we danced with Guilcher! (*Ad lib.*)

PERR (*very testily, as they pause*). Well, why don't you d-d-dance it, then, instead of just s-s-saying that over and over?

LEADER (*stopping them with upraised hand*). And why do you want that one, Perr? Tell us why you want that one.

PERR. I wa-wa-want to finish it.

ALL THE KORILS (*dancing excitedly to the same theme used in the second scene with the words "Bénéad dance with us," etc.*) He says he'll finish it! He says he'll finish it! Perr says he'll finish it, finish it now!

PERR (*gruffly, as they pause*). And then you'll p-p-pay me.

LEADER. Why do you say we'll pay you, Perr?

PERR. Why, you paid Bénéad Gu-Gu-Guilcher.

LEADER. We offered Bénéad a gift. We let him choose.

PERR (*greedily*). Yes—yes—you let him choose. And I can tell you now, I'll take what Bénéad left!

ALL THE KORILS (*laughing and dancing about*). Ha ha ha ha! Ha ha ha ha! Listen to Perr! Listen to Perr! He says he'll take what the other man left! He says he'll take what the other man left! That's what he'll take when he's finished the song! Listen to Perr! Oh, ha ha ha ha! (*Ad lib.*)

LEADER (*as they pause*). Well, let us hear him finish it. Come, Perr, and join us in the dance about the days. (*They begin, as in the second scene, a dance to the theme "Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday" making a more and more marked pause after "Saturday," but* PERR *is unready. After a time the* LEADER *stops the dance and addresses* PERR.) Come, man! Come, man! You said you'd finish it.

PERR. You g-g-go too fast; you never give me time. You start again before I have the t-t-time to s-s-say it.

LEADER. Then try it by yourself. Go on—let's hear it.

PERR (*singing the theme alone*).

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday,
Thursday, Friday, Saturday,
Ne-ne-ne-next comes Sunday.

. . . . . .

(*The music evidently needs a fourth line, but* PERR *has nothing for it and is silent or merely hums the air.*)

ALL THE KORILS (*in great excitement*). Go on! Go on! Go on!

PERR (*blankly*). Ne-ne-ne-next comes Sunday.

ALL THE KORILS. What next? What next? What next?

PERR (*stubbornly*). Ne-ne-ne-next comes Sunday—don't I tell you? Ne-ne-ne-next comes Sunday!

LEADER. But after that, Perr? after that? Go on and finish it!

PERR. There isn't any after that. It's f-f-finished, don't I tell you? That's all the we-we-week there is!

(*The* KORILS *mill about him in confusion, with incoherent cries and exclamations of disappointment and displeasure. Presently the* LEADER *silences them, with a sign for attention, and turns to* PERR.)

LEADER. Well, then, if you have finished, make your wish.

PERR (*impatiently*). I told you that before. I made the wish. I'll take what Bénéad left.

ALL THE KORILS (*repeating the laughing theme used earlier in this scene, as they dance about*). Ha ha ha ha! Ha ha ha ha! Listen to Perr! Listen to Perr! He says he'll take what the other man left! He says he'll take what the other man left! That's what he asks for a line of the song! He says he'll take what the other man left! Listen to Perr! Oh, ha ha ha ha!

(*At another sign from the* LEADER, *they stop. He beckons to* PERR.)

LEADER. Come, tailor man—come and get your wish. Come, little comrades—give Perr what Bénéad left.

(*They form a ring, as in* BÉNÉAD'S *case in the second scene, and begin a song with the same theme but somewhat different words.*)

ALL THE KORILS (*as they dance*). Up with it, on with it, out with it, there with it. Bid it be fixed, bid it to stay! Perr shall have something that Bénéad left! Perr! Perr! Perr! (*Ad lib.*)

(*They repeat the business used in the second scene, slapping and jostling* PERR *across the stage and just out of sight off stage, repeating their song and interjecting cries of "Ah, ah, ah, ah!" As before, the transformation takes place out of sight. The* KORILS *stream back onto the stage,* PERR, *now as humpbacked as* BÉNÉAD *was in the first scene, shuffling and stumbling after them. There is a hush as he stands bewildered, feeling his back and trying to see the hump between his shoulders, twisting his head in the attempt to look at it.*)

PERR (*furious*). Name of God! Name of God!

(*He makes futile threatening starts toward the* KORILS, *who withdraw to both sides, laughing, pointing at him and singing.*)

ALL THE KORILS (*as the curtain begins to fall*). Perr has got what Bénéad left! Perr has got what Bénéad left! Wh-o-o-o-o-o-e-e-e-e!

(*The long-drawn cry like the whistling of the wind does not die away until after the curtain is down.*)

CURTAIN

END OF SCENE 4

SCENE 5

Outside BÉNÉAD'S *cottage, the next morning. A noise of excited chatter is heard before the curtain rises.*

(*Discovered:* BÉNÉAD, TINAH *and the* THREE OLD WOMEN.)

FIRST OLD WOMAN (*speaking to* TINAH *as the curtain goes up*). I tell you, it is bigger than your husband's was—a hump like that (*Measuring with her hands.*) and Perr is furious—furious!

SECOND OLD WOMAN. And all the parish streaming up to see!

FIRST OLD WOMAN. And every new one coming makes him more furious still.

SECOND OLD WOMAN. And they have got another name for him already—they call him *Crooked* Perr the Stutterer now!

FIRST OLD WOMAN. They'd better not let him hear them when they do it, I can tell you!

TINAH. But how . . . but when . . . but what . . . how did it happen? How did he get it?

THIRD OLD WOMAN (*nodding sagely*). Ay! That's the question! That's what we would like to know! Queer things are doing in this parish, surely!

(BÉNÉAD *and* TINAH *exchange disturbed looks.*)

FIRST OLD WOMAN. You can't find out from him. No one can talk to him. He begins to curse them . . .

SECOND OLD WOMAN (*interrupting*). He threw a sabot straight at Tonyk's head, just as we came away.

TINAH. Tck! Tck! a sabot?

FIRST OLD WOMAN. Yes! You see, a lot of them, you know, to have a pretext, came up with old sabots

in their hands, as if they'd come to beg a little fire; and he seized Tonyk's, when he held it out, and threw it at him.

SECOND OLD WOMAN. He might have killed him!

THIRD OLD WOMAN. The way he looked, one would have said he meant to.

TINAH (*frightened*). Saint Anne and Mary Virgin!

(*She looks at* BÉNÉAD *in distress.*)

BÉNÉAD (*nervously*). He didn't say whether he'd gone . . . (*He stops in some confusion.*)

THIRD OLD WOMAN (*catching at* BÉNÉAD'S *words*). Gone where? Sleeping on the moors, like you?

BÉNÉAD. Oh, no! . . . nowhere . . . I meant, whether he'd been hurt, or anything?

THIRD OLD WOMAN. Jésus! How could a man be hurt like that? Queer things are doing in this parish, surely!

FIRST OLD WOMAN (*eagerly*). Sleeping on the moors! He might have been, now, thinking They might cure his stuttering.

THIRD OLD WOMAN (*skeptically*). Ay? It was you said a passing angel might have stopped to straighten Bénéad's back. And did he stop again to clap a hump on Perr's? If they have time for tricks like that, the Trinity had better give them more to do, I'm thinking, to keep them out of mischief.

FIRST OLD WOMAN (*contentiously*). Well, now, he might have done that too, seeing that it was Perr, and knowing well the kind of man he is . . .

PERR (*angrily, just off stage*). Get back there, the pack of you! Get out! Ahhhh! Name of God!

SECOND OLD WOMAN (*to* FIRST). Quick! He may have heard you!

(First *and* Second Old Women *run off. The* Third *follows more slowly, looking back toward* Perr's *entrance and crossing herself.*)

Third Old Woman (*as she goes off*). Mary Virgin, pray for us! Queer things are doing in this parish, surely!

(*Enter* Perr, *looking back the way he came and shaking his fist in that direction.*)

Perr. Name of God! Get out!

(*He dashes off again with upraised arm.*)

Bénéad (*in a low tone, to* Tinah). Jésus Marie! Did you see it? (Tinah, *terrified, crosses herself, her lips moving in a murmured prayer. She nods quickly to* Bénéad *without speaking to him.*) What are we going to do?

Tinah (*quickly, in a low tone*). Pretend not to notice it.

(*Reënter* Perr. *The plough-fork is stuck in his belt. He glares at* Bénéad *and* Tinah, *who make an awkward pretence at unconsciousness of the change in his appearance. They both speak at once.*)

Bénéad and Tinah. Good-morning, Perr. Good-morning!

Perr (*sneering*). Good-morning! Good-morning! Good God! Good devil! Is that all you have to say?

Bénéad. Why, what . . . what . . . what should we say? What . . . what do you want us to say, Perr?

Perr. What do I want you to say? What *did* you

say—that's what I want to know! Wha-wha-what *did* you say to your friends out there? What did you say to them?

BÉNÉAD. What do you mean? What did I say to what friends out where?

PERR. You know w-w-well enough wh-wh-what I mean!

BÉNÉAD. I don't know what you mean at all. I don't know what you are talking of.

PERR (*fiercely*). You don't? And you don't see what they d-d-did to me, d-d-d-do you? You don't see *th-th-that?* (*Turning round to show the hump.*)

BÉNÉAD. Why . . . I . . . I didn't know . . . I thought you might be joking somehow . . . making believe, you know.

PERR. You did, d-did you? Well, maybe you'll find out I am not joking, by and by! (*Furiously.*) What did you say to make them do it?

BÉNÉAD. You mean the korils . . . they did that, instead of . . .

PERR (*mimicking him*). Yes, the korils—they did that *instead* of . . . oh, *instead* of! or *because* of Bénéad, their pet, their favorite—taking this way to p-p-pay some grudge he thinks he owes the man who lent him money! What did you s-s-say to them, I want to know?

BÉNÉAD (*frightened*). Jésus Marie, Perr, I told you every word I said to them—the words I added to their song, and . . .

PERR (*breaking in*). Ahhhh! I mean, what did you tell them about me?

BÉNÉAD. Nothing at all! I call Saint Anne and all the saints to witness that I never spoke of you at all!

TINAH. Why should he, Perr, when he had no idea that you were going . . .

PERR (*breaking in*). Ah! So he would have t-t-told them if he'd known that I was g-g-going, eh?

TINAH (*distressed*). Oh, no! I don't mean that! of course I don't mean that!

BÉNÉAD. Why, look here, Perr—you know I tried to keep you from going there at all!

PERR (*sharply*). How did you know that I was going?

BÉNÉAD (*confused*). Why . . . no . . . I didn't know, of course. I only thought that when you took the plough-fork . . .

PERR (*suspiciously*). Ahhhhh!

BÉNÉAD. I only meant to say, I tried to keep from telling anyone about the korils—not you especially—just anyone . . . I was trying not to tell, until you made me.

PERR (*harshly*). Ah, yes—I see! I s-s-see! Here's Bénéad, the k-k-korils' pet—their favorite—gets something handsome for himself, and tries to keep the w-w-world from sharing! And then when someone m-m-makes him tell his s-s-secret, he and those devils plot to bring a c-c-curse upon him. That's the way it went! I s-s-see!

TINAH (*crying*). No! No! No!

BÉNÉAD. Mary Virgin, Perr! I swear by all the saints . . .

PERR (*breaking in*). "Perr has got what Bénéad left!" . . . That's what they shouted! "Perr has got what Bénéad left!" Well, then, if Perr has got B-B-Bénéad's hump, he'll have s-something else from B-B-Bénéad to even up the score! P-p-pay me my five crowns!

TINAH. Oh! Oh!

BÉNÉAD. Jésus Marie, Perr, you know I have not got them!

PERR. Pay me my five crowns, and p-p-pay them now!

BÉNÉAD. But, Perr, you said you'd give me time!

PERR. I said I'd give you time for something g-g-good—in 'change for something g-g-good—but not for this!

BÉNÉAD. It's not my fault it turned out wrong. I tried . . .

PERR (*breaking in*). Oh! It's my fault, is it? Well, it's not my f-f-fault you b-b-borrowed the five crowns.

TINAH. We didn't borrow five; we borrowed only three.

PERR. Oh, didn't you? And *I* should give *you* s-s-something, I suppose, for the ha-ha-happiness of letting you ha-ha-have the money, and something more for this? (*Indicating the hump.*) Come; are you going to pay me? Are you going to pa-pa-pay me?

TINAH. Saint Anne and Mary Virgin help us!

BÉNÉAD (*miserably*). You gave me time, Perr, and you took a pledge.

PERR (*wrenching the plough-fork from his belt and throwing it down*). I take it back, and there's your pledge!

BÉNÉAD. But, Perr . . .

PERR (*stumping up and down and fuming*). I'll get the bailiff . . . he shall sell the furniture, the tools, the pig. . . . I'll have my rights . . . that much, at least!

BÉNÉAD. Perr . . . please . . .

PERR. I'll have the crier cry the sale through all the parish! . . . You'll see!

BÉNÉAD. Perr!

PERR. Perr! Perr the hunchback, is it? Perr the hunchback! Well, it will be Bénéad the beggar!

Bénéad the beggar! Bénéad the b-b-beggar! You'll see! [*Exit* PERR.

TINAH. Oh, no! no! no! wait, Perr . . . wait . . .

(TINAH *gives way to unrestrained tears.* BÉNÉAD *sits down on the bench as if dazed, gazing dully in front of him and plucking at threads of his clothes. After an interval he speaks half to himself.*)

BÉNÉAD. What are we going to do now? What are we going to do!

TINAH (*agitated*). What are we going to do? Take up a pauper's sack and staff and go our way, begging from door to door!

BÉNÉAD. If we only had a little time . . .

TINAH. Yes! you were going to do great things, strutting around in golden uniform, and wearing a cocked hat, playing the gallant gentleman! And now . . . you see!

(*She breaks down in a storm of sobbing.*)

BÉNÉAD (*hopelessly*). Yes . . . I thought if only I were more like other men . . .

TINAH (*lifting her head*). I told you handsome was not rich! I told you . . . Oh, what is the use of being handsome, just to be paraded in a bankrupt's girdle—in the belt of straw! Oh, the shame of it!

BÉNÉAD. Oh, Tinah, Tinah! When I meant to make you proud and happy! And now—this! (*He buries his face in his hands.*)

(TINAH, *lowering her hands after a moment, looks at him, her angry mood softening.*)

TINAH. Don't, Bénéad . . . don't! (*She*

comes over slowly and stands behind him, touching his head with a hesitant caress, passing her hand half-consciously down his back.) Listen, Bénéad . . . see . . . we'll find some other place, where no one knows . . . where people haven't heard . . . and we'll find something . . . now that you are straight and tall and strong . . . there will be something . . . you are so straight now, and so handsome . . .

BÉNÉAD. Ah, Tinah, Tinah! That's where I did wrong . . . I should have chosen riches . . . then we shouldn't be . . .

TINAH. No; not when it meant so much . . . when all your life . . . oh, that *beast!* Just when we were so happy!

BÉNÉAD. Ah, but you, now! If I could have another chance . . . (*His eye lights on the plough-fork, and he straightens up with an abrupt change of tone.*) Tinah! Why couldn't I?

TINAH (*catching his tone of excitement*). You mean, why couldn't you . . .

BÉNÉAD (*rising and facing her*). Yes . . . why couldn't I have another chance? Perr has brought back the plough-fork.

TINAH (*still somewhat bewildered by the idea*). You mean . . . go back again, out there?

BÉNÉAD. Yes! yes! why not? Why, you yourself suggested it, yesterday morning!

TINAH. Yes . . . but since then . . .

BÉNÉAD. It couldn't make things worse!

TINAH. But, Bénéad—look at Perr!

BÉNÉAD. He must have done something to make them angry, if they did that to him.

TINAH. He said they did it to him—don't you know?

BÉNÉAD. Yes—he must have crossed them somehow; but anyway . . .

TINAH. What would you say to them?

BÉNÉAD. Why . . . ask them to let me choose again, and choose the other thing.

TINAH (*quickly*). No, Bénéad, no! Not that!

BÉNÉAD. Why not? We got along for all those years . . .

TINAH. Yes . . . before we knew the difference; but now . . . No! Bénéad! Wouldn't they give you just a little . . . or couldn't you do something more for them, and get another gift?

BÉNÉAD. Perhaps, perhaps. We'll see. But now we must get ready. Perr can't do anything to-day. He'll have to go to Vannes to get the bailiff and the crier. We have a chance to-night. We'll do the same way we did before—we'll both go to confession and to mass . . . come, hurry and get ready!

TINAH. But, Bénéad—you'll promise me you won't change *that*. (*Stroking his back caressingly.*)

BENEAD. Oh! (*Unconvincingly.*) Yes, yes, I'll promise.

TINAH. You'll swear before Saint Anne?

BÉNÉAD. Yes, yes . . . I'll swear—come, hurry and get ready for the mass! (*Exit* TINAH. BÉNÉAD, *cautiously, after she has gone.*) That is, you understand, don't you, Saint Anne, I swear I won't unless it's necessary; and you will guide me? (*To himself.*) That's one good thing about Saint Anne; she is so sensible. She has more sense than all the other saints together. (*As* TINAH *calls from off stage.*) Yes, Tinah, yes! I'm coming! [*Exit* BÉNÉAD.

CURTAIN

END OF SCENE 5

SCENE 6

The same night. The KORILS' *heath, as in* SCENES 2 *and* 4.

(*Discovered:* BÉNÉAD *and the* KORILS, *all seated.* BÉNÉAD *and the* LEADER *alone are talking, the rest of the* KORILS *listening in silence. The quiet of the opening is in contrast with the noise and movement of preceding scenes in the same setting.*)

LEADER. No, Bénéad, our magic won't do that.

BÉNÉAD. But surely, if you could have given either, when I chose before . . .

LEADER. Surely we could. We told you so.

BÉNÉAD. Then I don't see . . . if it is magic . . .

LEADER. It gathers like water in a dam. You open this gate, or you open that; the water all runs out the way you turn it. But it won't flow back again to go some other way.

BÉNÉAD. So then—is all the magic gone?

LEADER. We must make more.

BÉNÉAD. How do you make it?

LEADER. Ah—that depends on you, as well as us. Come—will you dance?

(*A murmur of pleasure arises among the* KORILS.)

BÉNÉAD. My heart is heavy for the dancing, little gentleman.

LEADER. Maybe the dancing feet will make a lighter heart. Come—will you dance?

(*The rippling murmur of pleasure among the* KORILS *is repeated.*)

BÉNÉAD (*hesitantly*). I would not be a killjoy, now that I have come, but . . . (*More eagerly, as an*

idea seems to dawn on him.) Is it the dancing makes the magic?

LEADER (*mysteriously*). Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah!

ALL THE KORILS (*rising and skipping about*). Bénéad, dance with us! Bénéad, dance with us! Bénéad, dance with us, dance with us now!

BÉNÉAD. Come on then, all of you! How shall we begin? (*They begin the dance of the days of the week, as before. When they come to the words, the* KORILS *sing the first line,* "*Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday;*" BÉNÉAD *sings the second,* "*Thursday, Friday, Saturday;*" *the* KORILS *take up the third line,* "*Ne-ne-ne-next comes Sunday,*" *which leaves* BÉNÉAD *without any words for the fourth line of the stanza. After this has gone the rounds several times,* BÉNÉAD *stops them.*) It seems to me, my little gentlemen, your song goes like the butcher's dog—on three legs only.

ALL THE KORILS. Truly it does, Bénéad—truly it does!

BÉNÉAD. I think if he had four, he would go better.

ALL THE KORILS (*with much excitement*). He would! He would! He would!

BÉNÉAD. Then, in my opinion, we should give him one more leg behind.

ALL THE KORILS (*still more excited*). Add it! Add it! Add it! Add it! Add it!

BÉNÉAD. Wait a minute . . . yes—he stumbles just a little, too, on one he has already. Wait . . . let me see . . . now let me see . . . (*There is a short silence, the* KORILS *waiting eagerly; then* BÉNÉAD *sings.*)

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday,
Thursday, Friday, Saturday;
Sunday, the day of heaven
Finishes out the seven!

(*There is a burst of excited noise among the* KORILS, *and then they seize* BÉNÉAD'S *hands and join in a final whirl of the dance, singing in chorus the completed stanza. The dance ends in a medley of laughter as they clasp one another and crowd around* BÉNÉAD. *The* LEADER *attracts their attention by raising his hand.*)

LEADER. Come, come, come!

ALL THE KORILS (*falling into a more orderly group. Chorus*).

Bénéad at last has saved us
From the spell that has enslaved us.
Bénéad! Bénéad! Bénéad!

BÉNÉAD. Now tell me, on my soul's salvation, what does this mean?

LEADER (*as the* KORILS *arrange themselves in a new grouping*). Listen, Bénéad, and I will tell you. Our proper kingdom is not here. 'Tis underneath the earth, below the beds of rivers and the sea. Ages ago, we were condemned to leave it, living among men and dancing through the nights, until some Christian, of his own accord, should finish our refrain. You were the first to help us. Then that miser, Perr, after he'd tried to make a bargain, promised us that he would do it, but he failed. We punished him for that, and more for what he was. Now you have finished it, and we are free. Come, little comrades; our kingdom waits, and Bénéad has set us free!

(*With joyous shouts and leapings the* KORILS *move toward the exits, but they pause again as* BÉNÉAD *calls to them.*)

BÉNÉAD (*pleadingly*). Oh, little gentlemen! Oh, little gentlemen! (*As they quiet down to hear him.*)

If that is how it is, please do not go away and leave your friend in trouble!

LEADER. What do you want, Bénéad? What can we do?

ALL THE KORILS. What do you want from us, Bénéad? What do you want?

BÉNÉAD. If you could leave me something to pay my debt to Perr to-day, and maybe just a little for the baker on the morrow?

LEADER. Shall we give Bénéad our wallets, little comrades? We do not need this treasure longer, since we have our own awaiting us.

ALL THE KORILS. Here, take our wallets, Bénéad—here, take our wallets! (*They throw the little brown bags, which they have been carrying on their backs, into* BÉNÉAD'S *lap as they gambol past him. He scramblingly gathers them up as the* KORILS *troop off, singing.*)

Bénéad at last has saved us
From the spell that has enslaved us.
Bénéad! Bénéad! Bénéad!

CURTAIN

END OF SCENE 6

SCENE 7

Outside BÉNÉAD'S *cottage. Very early the next morning.*

(*Discovered:* TINAH, *sitting on the bench, working mechanically with her wools. She has an air of preoccupation, and frequently stops, her eyes fixed, or lifts her head to listen.* BÉNÉAD'S *voice is heard, far off.*)

BÉNÉAD (*in the distance*). Hallo-o-o-o! Hola! Tinah! (TINAH *drops on her knees, praying silently.* BÉNÉAD, *nearer.*) Hola! Tinah! Tinah!

TINAH (*without rising*). Yes! Yes!

(*Her lips move faster, hurrying to finish her prayer. She jumps up just as* BÉNÉAD *enters.*)

BÉNÉAD (*rushing on*). Tinah! Tinah! I've brought enough to buy three parishes with all their judges and their rectors!

TINAH. Saint Anne and Mary Virgin! What is it, Bénéad—what is it?

BÉNÉAD. All the treasure of the korils! They have gone back to their own kingdom! They gave me everything they had here, in all their sacks!

TINAH (*reaching for one of the bags*). What is it, Bénéad? Oh, let me see it, quickly!

BÉNÉAD (*holding the bags closely*). Not here! Not here! Not yet! Wait . . . come inside and shut the door. We'll light a torch of fat-wood. . . . Come quickly, before anyone can see . . . (*The voices of the* OLD WOMEN *are heard approaching.*) Jésus Marie! Who's coming now? Here . . . hide them! hide them!

(*They throw the wallets hastily into the old tub, covering them with a big rag that is lying in it. Enter the* THREE OLD WOMEN, *talking excitedly. The* FIRST OLD WOMAN *has the plough-fork in her hand.*)

THIRD OLD WOMAN (*as she comes on*). I tell you, queer things are doing in this parish! Queer things! Queer things!

BÉNÉAD (*testily*). Well, what now? What is it now?

First Old Woman. Ay—what is it? That's what we would like to know! First you—then Perr . . .

Second Old Woman (*bursting in, in anxiety to tell the story*). And now the things we saw, just now, as we were coming through the heath, just on the border of the heath of Plaudren . . .

First Old Woman (*interrupting, trying to keep the telling of the tale*). We started out, you see, at the first streak of dawn, thinking to get back to Vannes before the market, and just as we began to cross the heath . . .

Second Old Woman (*cutting in again*). And then there came an eerie crying all across the heath, like some wild singing, and a dark mist moving . . .

First Old Woman (*interrupting as before*). And between the mists we saw the armies of the korils, marching, dancing—and then the mists swept by, and when they passed . . . why, there was nothing there! (*All cross themselves.*)

Tinah. But surely, all the world knows that the korils dance out on the moors of Plaudren!

First Old Woman. Yes—at night; but this was after dawn. We did not start until the dawn, for fear . . .

Second Old Woman (*interrupting*). And then, it was not like a dance, although some of them were dancing. 'Twas like an army moving.

Bénéad. Oh—the mist, you know. It takes queer shapes sometimes.

First Old Woman (*bridling*). Am I not old enough to know the difference? I tell you these were korils! And they were in between the mists! I know the difference!

Second Old Woman. And then there was the singing. We all heard that, didn't we?

(*She turns to the other* OLD WOMEN *who assent vigorously.*)

THIRD OLD WOMAN (*shaking her head sagely*). Queer things! Queer things! I want to see the curé.

FIRST OLD WOMAN (*holding out the plough-fork*). And just out here, I found this in the road.

BÉNÉAD (*involuntarily putting his hand to his belt*). My plough-fork! (*He takes it.*)

FIRST OLD WOMAN. Yours?

BÉNÉAD. Yes—that is . . . Perr had it. He . . . he borrowed it.

SECOND OLD WOMAN. Perr? What did Perr want of a plough-fork? How did it get there?

FIRST OLD WOMAN. Yes—how did it get there? They said Perr went to Vannes, to get the bailiff and the crier, but he wouldn't say what it was for. He just scowled and said, "Wait and see!"

(BÉNÉAD *and* TINAH *exchange troubled looks.*)

SECOND OLD WOMAN (*eagerly, as the new gossip occurs to her*). You heard what he did day before yesterday—did to old Margaridd, turning her out to be a pauper when she couldn't pay him with the usury he took?

ALL THE OLD WOMEN. Ay! Ay! Ay!

SECOND OLD WOMAN. And, the way he did it, too—coming on the place, cutting a sod of turf, and drinking from the well, and making fire on the hearth, and clipping him a bunch of hair from off the horse's tail—as if to shame her over all the place!

THIRD OLD WOMAN. 'Tis the old way, to show he's now the master of it all. 'Tis the old way of doing. Not many do it nowadays, but Perr's not taking any

chances. He'll make full sure 'tis his, when he has laid a hand on it!

(BÉNÉAD *and* TINAH *exchange looks again. He shows rising impatience to get rid of the old women.*)

SECOND OLD WOMAN. Well, Margaridd will not be grieving over what has happened to him.

FIRST OLD WOMAN. There's many of them in the parish that will say he's only got what he deserved, however 'twas he got it!

(*The bells are heard ringing the Angelus—three times three and then twelve strokes.*)

BÉNÉAD (*uneasily*). Well—if you want to see the curé, on your way to Vannes . . . the bells are ringing for the mass . . .

THIRD OLD WOMAN (*hastily*). Yes . . . yes . . . I want to see the curé. Come—let's go and tell the curé!

(*Exit the* THREE OLD WOMEN, *talking among themselves.*)

TINAH (*as soon as they have gone*). Saint Anne be praised! (*Crossing herself.*) Bénéad! To think they might be talking of us now, alongside of old Margaridd, if it were not for this! Come—quick! Let's get the wallets in and open them! Let me take one sack, Bénéad—just one . . . I want to see what's in them! (BÉNÉAD *takes one of the wallets from the tub and hands it to her. She opens it feverishly, looking in and then thrusting in her hand with a swift change to terror and dismay.*) Holy Virgin!

BÉNÉAD (*his voice taking a frightened and anxious*

tone as he catches her emotion). What is it . . . Tinah! What is it?

TINAH. They have tricked us!

(*She empties from the wallet a lot of pebbles, sticks and dead leaves.*)

BÉNÉAD. No! No! It can't be that! They wouldn't have done that! There's some mistake about that one! Wait—wait—let's see the others! (*They try several more, with the same result, their agitation increasing as the disappointment grows.* BÉNÉAD *drops heavily on the bench.*) Jésus Marie! Jésus Marie!

TINAH (*hysterically*). We might have known that nothing good could come from things like that! Saint Anne and Mary Virgin! It may have brought a spell on us and on the house, bringing this stuff back here! We never should have touched it! Ah, Mary Virgin! grant that I have some holy water left! Quick—put it all back while I go get the holy water! (*She rushes off while* BÉNÉAD *gathers up the wallets and their former contents and drops everything into the tub, occasionally muttering "Jésus Marie!"* TINAH *reënters with a bowl or jug, and hurriedly scrapes up the remnants. Then, while* BÉNÉAD *crosses himself, she sprinkles the contents of the tub, murmuring rapidly.*) In the name of the Three Persons and Saint Anne and Mary Virgin . . . (*She stops short, gazing into the tub, stupefied; then she reaches out and seizes* BÉNÉAD *by the coat, pulling him to her. Gasping.*) Bénéad! Bénéad! look what has happened!

BÉNÉAD (*bending over to look in and standing so, bewildered*). In the name of the Three Persons and Saint Anne and Mary Virgin!

(*They clasp each other, without taking their eyes off the tub.*)

TINAH. Oh, Bénéad! are . . . are they real? (BÉNÉAD, *releasing her, stoops and reaches into the tub, drawing out handfuls of coin, strings of jewels, glittering stones, etc.*) Oh! Oh! Oh!

BÉNÉAD (*exultantly*). I knew they wouldn't trick us! Oh, little gentlemen! Oh, little gentlemen! (*Hastily.*) Saint Anne and Mary Virgin!

TINAH. But what . . . Bénéad! the holy water must have . . .

BÉNÉAD. Don't you see? It was some spell the korils put upon their treasure to keep it hid from Christians. The holy water broke the spell. The holy water did it. Here—let's put it back into the bags again—put it away . . .

TINAH (*as they begin filling the wallets*). Keep out five crowns for Perr.

BÉNÉAD. And money for the fifty masses, at ten sous each mass—and then enough to give to each poor person in the parish an ell of cloth and a bushel of good wheat. And we will buy a farm at Josselin . . . a farm with four cows . . . or with maybe six . . .

CURTAIN

TO-MORROW

A play of mediæval Brittany. The plot follows approximately the story set forth in an old Breton ballad contained in the collection entitled "Barzaz Breiz," with translations into French by the Vicomte Th. de la Villemarqué, published at Paris, 1859.

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

LORD OF NAIRN.
LADY OF NAIRN.
MOTHER OF THE LORD.
A NURSE.
A SQUIRE.
PRINCESS OF THE LITTLE FOLK.

Off stage. A CELEBRANT OF THE MASS. CHOIR.

ACT I

A bed-chamber in the castle of the LORD OF NAIRN. *The room is hung with fine tapestries in subdued colors. There are two ogival-arched windows (casement),* R., *and a door in the back toward that side. A couch or divan bed stands somewhat down stage,* L., *and there are a few chairs in keeping with the setting.*

(*Discovered: the* LADY OF NAIRN, *lying on the divan, slight as a pale lily but radiant in her whiteness. The old* NURSE *stands near. Enter the* LORD OF NAIRN. *He approaches the bed softly, sinking on his knee as he takes his lady's hand and presses it first to his lips and then to his heart. He rises; the* NURSE *places a chair for him and steals out.*)

LADY OF NAIRN. Thou hast seen the babes?

LORD OF NAIRN. I have seen them—I have seen my son!

LADY. Thy little daughter . . .

LORD. Yes, I have seen her, too; but I have seen my son!

LADY. Thou art content?

LORD. All suddenly, the world is overfilled with happiness. And such a little while ago—was it a little while? It seems a lifetime!—yea, but a little while ago I looked into the black abyss of dread.

LADY. I had no fear.

LORD. No fear of leaving me?

LADY. I knew I should not. And besides . . . Tell me, dear lord . . . The hour before a battle . . . is it one of dread, for fear thou mayst not come to me again?

LORD. Ah, that! a battle . . . that is different. A man is at his strongest, and he knows God and St. Michael are behind his arm. He fights with things he knows, and knows that he can overcome. And he is lifted far above himself.

LADY. And for the woman—what of the blessed Virgin and Saint Ann, whom your St. Michael serves, and to whose prayer the Lord Himself gives heed? They, too, have borne. The woman does not need to know, since Mary and her mother both watch over her with power and wisdom infinite. And if the man mounts higher than himself, the wife is lifted over all the world to touch the very gate of heaven itself.

LORD. Ah, but I feared that thou mightst enter in!

LADY. Indeed, I entered—but my heaven is here.

LORD. And is it so? Why, then for me 'tis doubly heaven; and shall be heaven for them—my little son—(*She holds up a warning finger.*) my daughter and my

son! (*They relapse into a short silence. He looks musingly into space and she watches him. After a moment he speaks again.*) Now it is all so safe, where lately there was dim and dread anxiety. Another Lord of Nairn—and after him, we have no room to doubt, succeeding Lords of Nairn; the title and the line secure, established.

LADY (*seizing his hand*). Nay—I will have no other lord than thee, my own dear lord! A young lord still; long, long years hence, a staid and portly lord. And after more years than we need to think of now, a noble white-haired lord—but always, always this, my own dear lord!

LORD. So may God will! And in those distant days, a white-haired lady, too. But after them—for there will come a time when we shall be content to sleep, and let another keep the towers, and watch . . .

LADY (*breaking in*). No, no! That is too far, too sad! One does not, just at dawn, when men are singing lauds, begin to chant his vespers—even less the compline! And this is the dawn; for us, dear lord, this is the rosy dawn! (*He raises her hand to his lips.*)

LORD. So be it. Let us think of matins. How shall we begin?

(*He releases her hand as she shifts her position, turning more directly toward him.*)

LADY. What hast thou planned for him—for thou hast planned?

LORD. Why, yes—not knowing surely—yet I planned.

LADY. And I, not knowing surely, have not asked, fearing that thou mightst build too fond a dream. But tell me now.

LORD. I think to order so that when he comes to

age, the world shall say of him, as of du Guesclin, that no other man of all his time can rival him in chivalry.

LADY. They say du Guesclin was unlovely as a child.

LORD. He had not such a mother. What du Guesclin lacked, or learned but late, it will be thine to give him while a boy.

LADY. And that will be . . . ?

LORD. Gentleness toward the weak, reverence for women, a princely charity—to give his garments, if he have not gold, for them who need—and knowledge of Our Lady and the saints.

LADY. Whate'er du Guesclin's mother may have been, he sure had no such sire! And thou wilt teach him . . . ?

LORD. Well as I may—he shall have greater masters, too—(*She makes a sign of affectionate dissent.*) he shall be taught to ride, to hunt, to hawk, to joust in tourney and to fight in war with sword and lance, with mace and battle-ax; never to make war wrongfully, nor for world's goods; to keep his castle, rule his barony, to wear his title worthily and serve his king.

LADY (*sighing*). To joust—to fight ——

LORD. 'Tis the knight's part. Thou wouldst not have him less?

LADY. No . . .

LORD. No! Being daughter of a knight, and wedded to a knight, thou wouldst not have thy son a clerk.

LADY. And then, he will have thee to guard him, till he gain address.

LORD. And I shall have his strength to lean upon, when mine begins to fail.

LADY. Nay, nay, dear lord! Think not upon that long to-morrow! I would that it might always be to-day!

LORD. We must not fear to-morrow. Yet I am glad the anxious yesterday is gone, and in its place we have our glad to-day—our glad and sure to-day!

LADY. I would that it might always be to-day!

LORD. See, dear, how happier to-day than yesterday! Shall we not dare a little more—dare now to wish for widening to-days, for noons more golden still than is the dawn? As for myself, at times I am impatient of the years ere I can see my son, stalwart and skilful in the field of arms, winning his knighthood!

LADY. I would that it might always be to-day!

(*She falls back on her pillows, pressing her kerchief to her eyes and reaching gropingly toward him with the other hand.*)

LORD (*suddenly solicitous, kneeling beside the couch and pressing her hand in both of his*). What is it, dearest? What hath brought these tears? (*She does not speak, but yields instead to a little storm of sobbing.* LORD *clasps her hand more closely.*) My little dear! I have outwearied thee with so much talk! I should have remembered. (*He makes as if to rise.*)

LADY (*drawing him back*). Nay—do not go! It is not that. It is not that at all. Dear—do not go!

LORD (*yielding*). What is it, then?

LADY. I do not know. Some sudden dreadful fear that shot across my mind—some dreadful, nameless fear of . . . of . . . I know not what! (*Looks up, trying to smile.*) Why, now 'tis past, I could not tell at all what it was of!

LORD. 'Tis just that thou art weak.

LADY. 'Tis just the brilliant sunshine of our joy, that makes all common happiness look dark by contrast; and if a sadder thought, unbid, enter the mind, 'tis black as midnight. I was but blinded, dear, by so

much light, and for an instant had a sense of falling. But see! 'Tis gone!

LORD. Shall I not call the nurse?

LADY. Nay, nay, dear—do not call. I have no need of her. Give me thy hand instead. (*She turns again toward him, and he arranges the pillows under her shoulder.*) Now! Let the days go by, each bringing as it comes some new delight. See, good my lord! Thy little son is growing fast. How shall his knightly schooling be conducted?

LORD. We will begin it in the nursery, with playhouse castles and toy men-at-arms. But most I dream of somewhat later days, when he begins to ride, and I can take him with me to the chase; days in the greenwood—nights about the fire, where he can listen while the minstrel tells of deeds of valor in the olden time. And there will be crusaders there—fair knights who fought the infidel in far-off lands. And then the tourneys; he shall take his part with other striplings . . .

LADY. I shall have troublous times, I fear, to find an hour to talk of ladies and of gentler things.

LORD. Nay—for we will hold court, and thou shalt act the queen, so he may learn the ways of ceremony and of gentle courtesy.

LADY. And if his mother play the queen, his sister shall be princess.

LORD. And tell me now, in turn . . . our little daughter. Hast thou dreams for her?

LADY. I have one lovely dream, and only one; that she shall find a lord as dear as mine.

LORD (*rising and pacing gently to and fro*). Now hath thy woman's heart unhorsed my labored wisdom at the first tilt! Thou hast outdone me, dear, and found a better answer and a larger way. I might have compassed most of my desire by saying just "I plan

to find for him a lady like to thee;" for if our son, in turn, love the right maiden in a noble way, she will arouse all gracious qualities; and as they grow within him, he will grow perfect in chivalry among his peers, just to his vassals, loyal to his king.

LADY (*hastily*). But 'twill be many years—oh, many, many years, before he thinks of any maid!

LORD. And meantime, he has thee. . . . (*Meditatively.*) Man trains the body; woman shapes the soul. . . . Mine is the lesser part; yet it is something, too. To hold the saddle in the shock of war, to thrust and strike and parry; these the knight must know, and know supremely, so he may prevail. And he must learn the strategy of battle—the rules of war—the code . . . (*He resumes his seat, apparently following his thought in silence. Then he speaks again, still musingly.*) At twelve, du Guesclin had a charger, all with knightly trappings, and his boyish armor. Our son shall have the same.

LADY. At twelve! my baby boy! He'll be a man at twelve. . . . Yes, I would have him knightly. I would have him all that doth befit a knight.

LORD. And his sword . . . as soon as he can take a step, and lisp, he shall be taught the honor of his sword . . . it shall be forged . . . I'll seek the best artificers of France and Spain . . . the Duke will counsel me. I'll ask the Duke to-morrow.

LADY. To-morrow? The Duke comes here to-morrow?

LORD. Nay, but to-morrow I must see the Duke. The Duke hath called a council.

LADY. And thou must go?

LORD. And I must go. 'Twill be but brief.

LADY. 'Tis a long journey.

LORD. I will ride in haste. In three days, at the

longest, I'll return. 'Tis long to leave thee and our little son—but now 'tis all so safe. And thou hast him—the little lord of Nairn.

LADY. I would have thee!

LORD (*stroking her hair*). What shall I bring thee—nay, what can I bring the mother of the little lord of Nairn? Because she is his mother, I would lay some rare and costly offering in her hands, in joy and gratitude—vesture of samite, caskets of precious carven woods, perfumes of Araby, goldsmith's work and gems . . .

LADY. Nay, none of these!

LORD. I would I could bring all of them; but 'twill be naught but some small foolish thing that I can find in our lean land or buy with a lean purse—a kerchief, or some wild game from the forest? A brace of woodcock? Shall I hunt the deer?

LADY (*laughing*). A bit of venison, to make me strong to rear the little lord of Nairn? Nay, dear; bring me a bit of heather from the moor, and thy dear self. I need no more.

LORD (*eagerly*). Thou hast a fancy for the venison?

LADY. Nay, dear, 'twas but a passing thought. I dread the forest; 'tis an eerie place.

LORD. My little lady, what is there to dread? Some scurvy bands of starveling outlaws, picking here and there from wayfarers as wretched as themselves, or now and then fleecing a cringing merchant or a portly burgher? A knight has less to fear from them than has an eagle from so many brawling sparrows!

LADY. Nay—I do not think of men.

LORD. Of what, then, dost thou think?

LADY. I do not know; and that is why I dread it.

LORD. Thou dost not know the forest, dear, as I do.

LADY. Perhaps my fear is that thou dost not know it as it is.

LORD. Thou hast in mind, perchance, the tales the elders tell?

LADY. They say that in the wood of Broceliande, Merlin is sleeping underneath the rock. . . .

LORD. I know the place, for I have been there many times, and have not wakened him.

LADY. And Vivien, too, had there her ivory tower where she imprisoned Launcelot.

LORD. The tower is gone, and Vivien is gone, these many hundred years.

LADY (*with increasing agitation*). And ghosts of the old druids . . .

LORD (*indulgently*). See, dear, I will not vex thee. Wert thou fully strong, I'd say I would not change my path for man nor devil, Merlin nor Vivien, nor for all the ghosts that fable saith cry through the Endless Valley. But I'll not vex thee. I'll not ride the forest Broceliande, nor any haunted spot. And if I seek the hart, to bring thee home a bit of savory venison, 'twill be in some small friendly wood thou wouldst not fear thyself—some wood of bluebells and of primroses. Will that content thee?

LADY. That will be happier. For somehow, when thou spakest of the forest, that terror seemed to touch my heart again.

LORD. Nay, think no more of terrors. Think of naught but happiness. Thou hast a son! Think but of that sure happiness, that he may draw no thought of fear from thee.

LADY (*eagerly*). Doth the Duke know?

LORD. Not yet. I did not send a herald, liking best to bear the word myself.

LADY. And will he care?

LORD. He will rejoice, for us, and for himself, and for the kingdom, knowing the barony is thus enduringly secured. (*He rises.*)

LADY. Now must thou go?

LORD. As soon as may be. The earlier start, the earlier return.

LADY. How shall I pass the time till thou return?

LORD (*laughing*). I think the little lord will answer that. But if an hour hang heavy, plan—perchance a pageant for his christening—or his colors—or his banner. (*He bends over and kisses her, then sinks on his knee and kisses her hand, rises and goes to the door, where he stops for a moment.*) To-morrow, I shall say "to-morrow I will see my lady and my children—I will see my son!" [*Exit the* LORD, *singing.*

(*Enter at once the* NURSE, *going toward the bed. The* LADY *puts her kerchief to her eyes.*)

NURSE. See, Madame, 'tis but till the morrow of to-morrow . . . shall I bring the babes?

(*She starts off, but stops as the* LADY *speaks.*)

LADY. The morrow of to-morrow! He said we must not fear to-morrow. I wished that it might always be to-day, but now . . . (*The clatter of the* LORD'S *horse's hoofs is heard outside, rapidly dying away.*) he's gone, and with him goes to-day. I must think only of to-morrow! (*To* NURSE.) Yes—bring the babes. Bring me the little Lord of Nairn!

CURTAIN

END OF ACT I

ACT II

The edge of a forest. L., *the border of the wood.* R., *a wild moor. Near* C., *down stage, a dolmen—two crude upright stones with a huge rough slab lying horizontally across their tops like a lintel. A boulder close to one of the uprights makes a natural seat. In front of the dolmen, and a little to the* L., *a spring.*

(*Discovered: the* PRINCESS OF THE LITTLE FOLK, *seated on the top of the dolmen. She is beautiful, with the beauty of a wild creature, and she has long golden hair which she is combing while she sings. When the sound of a hunting horn, or the cry of the huntsman, is heard in the distance, she stops momentarily to listen, looking off toward the forest from which the sound comes.*)

PRINCESS (*sings*).[1]

A lady fine and fair of face
Doth stop beside the market place:
"What here hath happed—what means this thing
That I do hear the church bells ring?"

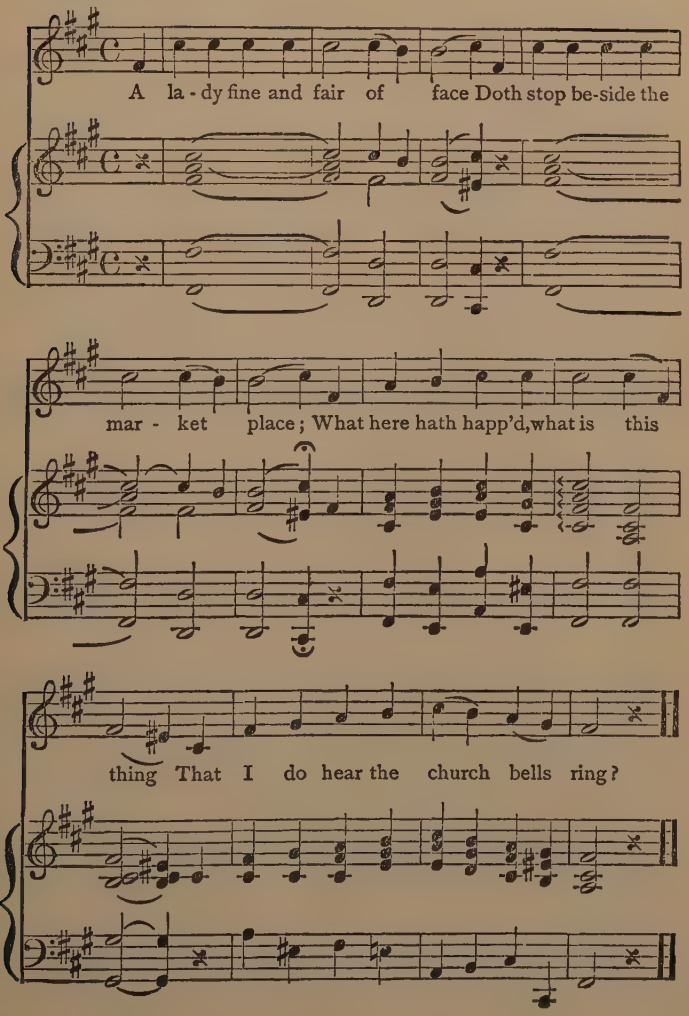
An old man there the lady heard
And answered straight upon the word:
"One whom we had as lord, a knight,
Is dead, my lady, yesternight."

Scarce had he spoke, that aged man,
When to the tomb the lady ran.
Fast flowed her tears, as fast she flew;
Her hair, unbound, around her blew.

[1] The air of the PRINCESS'S song is an old Breton ballad, "Diougan Gwenchlan" (the prediction of Gwenchlan); the words are a free adaptation of stanzas from another Breton ballad—"Bran"—recounting the death of a knight of that name.

Princess's Song

Tomorrow. Act II


A la - dy fine and fair of face Doth stop be-side the
mar - ket place; What here hath happ'd, what is this
thing That I do hear the church bells ring?

The bar is drawn, the portal swings,
Upon the corse herself she flings
And in her arms clasps him amain.
From thence she ne'er shall rise again.

(*Voices are heard close at hand in the forest. The* PRINCESS *slips down off the dolmen and hides behind it,* R. *Enter the* LORD OF NAIRN, L. *He wears a tunic of chain mail, and a hunting cap with a feather, which he takes off with an air of heat and weariness. He stands a moment looking at the dolmen; then, seeing the spring, he kneels and drinks. The* PRINCESS *peeps around the dolmen and watches him as he does so, but draws back as he rises. He seats himself on the boulder,* L., *wiping his brow and wrists with his kerchief. Enter the* SQUIRE, L. *He remains standing.*)

LORD. 'Twas a good chase.

SQUIRE. A lordly chase, sir, and a noble kill! I thought he would have charged thee.

LORD. That's where I had him. Had he dared less, he might be coursing yet. He might e'en have escaped.

SQUIRE. I did not think to find a stag this side. Now, had it been the wood of Broceliande . . .

LORD. And he was headed straight for Broceliande. That's where I feared to lose him, for I had pledged my lady not to ride by Broceliande.

SQUIRE. Ay. They say 'tis haunted—and this forest, too.

LORD. This forest, too? I had not heard . . . well, now 'tis overpast without mischance. And as it hath turned out, he led us on toward home. It was a hot league—and a thirsty one!

(*He goes to the spring to drink again.*)

SQUIRE. Sir! Sir! 'Twere better not to drink from there!

LORD (*pausing in surprise*). Not drink from there? Why not? (SQUIRE *points to the dolmen.*) And what of that?

SQUIRE (*hesitantly, looking about him anxiously, especially at the dolmen*). The old folk say, my lord . . . they say . . . that in the ancient days the waters all were pagan. Those that no priest hath blessed—that have not yielded to Our Lady or some saint, are still witched by . . . the Little Folk . . . who raised these stones . . . pray, sir, command me not to tell thee here!

LORD (*good-naturedly*). The old folk say the things that old wives think. Their wits grow cloudy, sitting in smoky huts around a smoky fire, and they see spectres where there is but smoke. Besides, I have already drunk —and see! No curse is come. (*He stoops and drinks again, as before. The* SQUIRE *makes a hasty gesture as if to prevent him, stops, and makes the sign of the cross, as he watches him. The* PRINCESS, *unseen by either of them, peers around the dolmen and sees the* LORD *drink, but withdraws swiftly as the* SQUIRE *makes the sign.* LORD *rises and returns to his seat.*) Go, now; thou art less spent than I. Go thou and make the quarry; I will rest the while. Bring me a haunch that I may take it to my lady, but hang the carcase on a sapling. I will send a varlet with a burden beast to fetch it home. We will ride light, for I am fain to see my lady and the little lord.

SQUIRE. As my lord commands.

(*Exit* SQUIRE *reluctantly, turning to look back at the dolmen just as he goes off. The* LORD *after a moment drinks again from the spring. As he is*

doing so, the PRINCESS *emerges confidently from her concealment and seats herself on the dolmen. The* LORD, *rising, meets her fixed gaze directed toward him.*)

PRINCESS. Thou hast drunk deep, Sir Knight. And was the water good?

LORD. I thank thee, lady, it was very good. The spring is thine?

PRINCESS. The spring is mine.

LORD. Then I will thank thee twice.

PRINCESS. But thou hast drunk three times.

LORD. And shall I thank thee thrice?

PRINCESS. Perchance it had been well to ask the price before.

LORD. I did not think thy hospitality would ask a price; but since 'tis so, tell me what is to pay, for I am not a man to fly the reckoning.

PRINCESS. No man can fly this reckoning, Sir Knight. It would be easier to fly his shadow. A spell is in the waters of the spring, and he who drinks takes it into his being. It possesseth him until the price be paid.

LORD. A spell—what is the spell? And is the price so high that the whole man is taken and distrained in bond for payment?

PRINCESS. 'Tis not too high a bond against the payment due, seeing that payment is the man himself.

LORD. The man himself?

PRINCESS. That is the spell.

LORD. How may it be redeemed?

PRINCESS. Ah, that! Thou hast done well to put the question, for there is a way—a royal way—of treaty. Wouldst thou know it?

LORD. Tell me.

PRINCESS. I call it royal—for I am a princess. (*The* LORD *bows gravely.*) My sires were kings before the moon was born, and from their thrones they watched the towers of Is and of Atlantis sink into the sea. By title held from them, I rule the still tarn and the falling water, and every flowing spring and stream is mine.

LORD (*startled*). But those who held that old dominion of the waters were not mortal. They were the Little Folk. Then thou must be . . . Thou art a princess of the Little Folk?

PRINCESS. And am I beautiful?

LORD. Men would call thee so.

PRINCESS (*drawing nearer*). I have a score of coronets, Sir Knight, each one more golden than my hair, set with such gems as thou hast never seen. I have queenly veils woven of silver moonlight and the rose of dawn, rarer than those the Queen of Sheba wore to witch King Solomon. And to wear with these, I have besides girdles of sea-pearls, bracelets of coral, necklaces of jade. And I have caskets carved from ivory, malachite, amber and carnelian. Beneath each menhir lies a treasury of wealth uncountable, and all these treasuries are mine.

LORD (*increasingly disturbed*). Thou art a Princess of the Little Folk!

PRINCESS. I can sing, Sir Knight, so that the skylark stills his melody to hear, and, poised on outspread wing, hangs mute in the mid-heaven, entranced to silence. I can dance such steps the very fairies marvel, and the Lady Moon forgets her path across the skyway as she waits to watch.

LORD. Why dost thou tell me this?

PRINCESS. That thou mayst see how royal is the way of treaty for redemption of the spell.

LORD. And that way is?

PRINCESS. That thou shalt marry me; for then shall I and all I have be thine.

LORD. Nay, lady. Wert thou twenty times as fair, and were thy wealth a hundred fold as great, and were there thousand spells and each more dread, I would not marry thee. For one glad heavenly year I have been wed, and for all years of earth and heaven to come I will have none but my dear lady for my wife.

PRINCESS. I know an herb will cause thee to forget. I know of ways to waken such delights that thou shalt pass a thousand fairy years and think 'tis but to-morrow.

LORD. To-morrow, Princess, I have pledged my lady to be home; and not for an eternity of fairy joys would I forget one hour of her, nor would I marry thee.

PRINCESS. Come; I will weave a charm upon thine eyes, to heal their mortal blindness. Then shalt thou see such fields of loveliness that all earth's fairest gardens seem a waste beside them; then shalt thou see me as I am, so radiant in beauty that thou canst no longer think of any woman.

LORD. There is no beauty, Princess, anywhere, like to the beauty of the sunlit room where my wife sits, nursing her baby son. There is no beauty, Princess, anywhere like to the beauty of my lady's soul.

PRINCESS. But if thou wed me, I shall win a soul.

LORD. Then win it, Princess, through some other man. Neither to save my soul nor gain thee thine, in no wise will I marry thee.

PRINCESS (*as she moves away and seats herself on the dolmen, her manner changing from seductiveness to anger and cruelty*). Oh, fool! Oh, poor blind fool! Choosing to be a slave, when thou mightest be a king! Turning from splendor that knows naught of time, to chase the shadows of a ne'er-to-be to-morrow! Thou

hast forgot, Sir Knight, that all the days of all thy years are forfeit to the spell. In their place and stead, I proffered magic centuries. But if thou still wilt have thy dull and mortal morrow, it shall be only after seven years.

LORD. How sayest thou—seven years? Thou canst not stop the wheeling of the sun, that brings the morrow when the night is past.

PRINCESS. Nay; but thou shalt not mark the wheeling sun. He shall bring days on days, and spring shall follow spring; seven times the forest shall leaf out—seven times the leaves shall fall, while thou still waitest thy to-morrow. So shalt thou give me seven years to serve thy bondage, ere thou break the spell.

LORD. Bondage to whom? What bondage?

PRINCESS. Bondage to me, and bondage to the spell.

LORD. What magic of the pit the spell may weave, I know not—but one thing I know; I will not serve thee. I'll serve no other lady but mine own. Let someone else, who fears thee, yield to bondage. I shall take my way to join my lady and my little son.

PRINCESS. So, like a hare that's taken in a net, thou tightenest the cords with every turn; and struggling foolishly to fly, dost make escape impossible. Twice have I shown thee how to break the spell; twice hast thou spurned me. So be it. Go thy way. But as thou ridest, hearken well, Sir Knight, and thou wilt hear, like echoes of thy horse's hoof-beats, growing ever louder, the footfalls of the doom that rideth close beside thee. I can see it now . . . there . . . there (*Pointing.*) . . . the shadow, rising . . . reaching! Ride, then—oh, ride! To-morrow men shall toll thy knell and chant thy requiem!

LORD. It may be so; but I have outfaced death at closer grips than that; and when I die, I think 'twill be

because the good God wills, and not from any fairy spell.

(*A halloo is heard from the forest, and as the knight turns in that direction the* PRINCESS *slips down from the dolmen and disappears behind it. When he turns back she is gone. Enter the* SQUIRE, *showing great excitement and distress.*)

SQUIRE. My lord, the stag is gone!

LORD. Gone?

SQUIRE. Ay, sir, 'tis gone. There is no trace at all —no sign of where he went, no mark left of the struggle where he died. It is as if the whole thing were a dream.

LORD (*to himself*). Perhaps . . . Was that, too, but a spell? Were we already so bewitched?

SQUIRE. I have been so long because, thinking some outlaw might have stole the beast, I sought his track. Then, finding nothing, I went back along our course. The hoof-prints of our horses all are plain—but not a mark of stag's foot anywhere!

LORD. Thou saidst too well the wood is haunted. The witch spoke true . . . black magic was at work to lead me here, and blacker magic hath caught hold of me.

(*He sits, reaching out his hand uncertainly to steady himself.*)

SQUIRE. Wilt thou come, my lord, and see it for thyself?

LORD. No. 'Tis no matter. Deeply as I desired to carry home the stag, its loss would be a very little thing but for the blacker thing it presages. Bring me my horse, and help me to the saddle.

SQUIRE (*anxiously*). My lord is ill?

LORD. So ill, good squire, that I shall scarce get home.

SQUIRE. Shall I not rather ride in haste to seek the leech?

LORD. Nay; get me home. No leech knows aught of this. The priest, perchance . . . but do thou get me home. To-morrow morn thou wilt be following my bier. My lady must not know. I charge thee straitly, let none tell my lady. Hasten, good squire—my horse, and get me to the saddle.

(*The* SQUIRE, *after a movement of uncertainty, runs off* L. *The* LORD *sits looking fixedly at the hunting cap in his hands, mechanically folding the border of it back and forth.*)

CURTAIN

END OF ACT II

ACT III

Same setting as ACT I. *The casement windows at the* R. *are open. There is a straight chair near the head of the bed, and a fauteuil between the windows,* R.

(NOTE: *The singing of the mass which runs through the latter part of the act begins within the chapel, close by the castle itself. It continues as the procession moves out of the chapel and around the space enclosed by the outer walls, thus receding for a while, and then returning as the procession moves back to the tomb, outside the chapel and nearly under the windows of the* LADY'S *room.*)

(*Discovered: the* LADY OF NAIRN, *propped in a half-sitting position on the couch. She is holding and*

caressing a sprig of heather. Enter the MOTHER *of the* LORD OF NAIRN. *At the sound of the opening door the* LADY *starts up eagerly.*)

LADY. My dear lord! . . . Oh! I thought it was my lord!

MOTHER. Would that it had been, daughter, for thy sake!

LADY. I thought he would have come ere this. It is so long to wait! 'Twas such a little moment he was here last evening, and I had so much to say! But then he was so spent and weary there was scarce a word except "Dear wife! I brought the heather for remembrance"—and then, "Sleep well, until to-morrow," and he slipped away.

MOTHER. Ay, daughter, waiting is a weary thing. . . . Be glad, my child, that thou wert waking when he came last night, to welcome him!

LADY. Oh, it was scarce a foretaste of a welcome—one kiss, one long caress, scarce one of all the thousand loving words I have to say to him! He is awake?

MOTHER. Nay, daughter . . . he is not awake.

LADY. After his weary ride, he sleepeth heavily.

MOTHER. Indeed . . . he sleepeth heavily. I would, my child, that thou couldst sleep a while. See—I will close the casement and shut out the light.

(*She moves toward the window, but stops and hesitates as the* LADY *speaks.*)

LADY. Nay, nay, I pray you! Leave the window wide. I want the light to see his face when he shall come. I want to hear his voice, his footstep in the court. Let it stand open, that the sound may enter.

MOTHER (*looking toward the window uneasily*). He will not come, my child, whilst thou art sleeping, and

thou must gather strength. Think of thy babes! So let me . . .

(*She makes another hesitant move toward the window.*)

LADY. Nay—if thou leave it open, I will try to sleep; but if 'tis closed I cannot. Come—sit thou here. Come; I will try to sleep. (MOTHER *reluctantly returns and sits near the bed, watching the window furtively and uneasily. The* LADY *leans back on the pillow and closes her eyes. Enter the* NURSE, *very quietly. She tiptoes over to the window, and with her hand on the casement turns and looks enquiringly at the* MOTHER, *who makes a negative sign, and pointing very slightly to the* LADY *and shaking her head, indicates that the* LADY *has refused to permit it. The* NURSE, *with a gesture of despair, goes out as silently as she came in.* LADY *opens her eyes and turns to the* MOTHER *with quick restlessness.*) Now my dear lord thy son is come again, 'tis time to talk about my churching. What gown shall I put on?

MOTHER. Thy churching . . . ay—I had forgot.

LADY. I would wear something that my lord doth like, and which would please him best. What think you—shall I wear my robe of blue, or shall I rather don my rose-red gown?

MOTHER. Why, daughter—it were better, maybe . . . the fashion hath come in of late . . . the fashion hath come in . . . of wearing black.

LADY. Black—for my churching? Then we must call in the sempstress. Wilt thou have her called?

MOTHER. She shall be called, before the day be gone. But sleep, my daughter; for a little, sleep.

(*The* LADY *composes herself again, half-heartedly.*)

LADY. If I should sleep, wilt thou keep watch, and when his footstep soundeth, waken me before he come?

MOTHER. If thou wilt sleep, my daughter, I will watch.

(*A bell begins to toll, slowly. The* MOTHER *starts from her chair, but glances at the* LADY, *and seeing that she is lying with her eyes open, sinks back into her seat. The sound of chanting mingles with the strokes of the bell.*)

CHOIR (*from within the chapel, a short distance away*).

Kyrie eleison!
Christe eleison!
Kyrie eleison!

LADY (*looking up*). What are the offices they sing? It is too late now even for the terce. Why do they ring the bell?

MOTHER (*with attempted composure*). A solemn mass . . . I think . . . the Duke hath ordered sung.

(*As they listen, the chanting grows louder and reveals itself as a requiem. The noise of a procession moving with slow and heavy tread comes through the window.*)

CHOIR (*passing outside*).

Dies irae, dies illa
Solvet saeclum in favilla
Teste David cum Sibylla

Quantus tremor est futurus
Quando judex est venturus
Cuncta stricte discussurus.

Tuba mirum spargens sonum
Per sepulchra regionum
Coget omnes ante thronum.

LADY. It is a requiem! The mass is for the dead! Why is it sung?

MOTHER. Some poor good man who came last night, asking for shelter, and did die at dawn. I did not wish to tell thee, dear, fearing lest thy compassion do thee hurt.

LADY. I would that I had known the man was here. And could the leech do naught?

MOTHER. It was some malady no leech could heal.

LADY. Poor man! I hope that there are none to grieve for him.

(*They listen again to the sound of the receding choir. The bell continues to toll, solemnly and very slowly, throughout the act.*)

CHOIR (*somewhat further away*).

Rex tremendae majestatis
Qui salvandos, salvas gratis
Salva me, fons pietatis

Recordare, Jesu pie,
Quod sum causa tuae viae
Ne me perdas illa die.

LADY. Perchance my lord hath gone with them.

(*The* MOTHER, *with a sudden start, drops her kerchief and stoops to pick it up, taking advantage of the movement to conceal from the* LADY *the shock of emotion she cannot control. As she rises, she moves toward the window, to keep her face averted from the* LADY. *She speaks with difficulty.*)

MOTHER. Perchance . . . he . . . hath.

LADY. Wilt thou not go, my mother dear, and bring him straightway to me when he shall return?

MOTHER (*moving hastily toward the door, and still keeping her face averted*). I will go down . . . I do not know . . . I will come back to thee.

(*As she passes out of sight of the* LADY *she visibly* [*to the audience*] *gives way to her grief. The* LADY *lifts herself higher on her pillows, takes the sprig of heather, raises it to her lips, and then fastens it in her bosom. As she does so, the chanting of the returning* CHOIR *grows louder.*)

CHOIR (*approaching*).

Qui Mariam absolvisti
Et latronem exaudisti
Mihi quoque spem dedisti

Preces meae non sunt dignae
Sed tu bonus fac benigne
Ne perenne cremer igne

Inter oves locum paesta
Et ab hoedis me sequestra
Statuens in parte dextra.

(*Reënter the* MOTHER, *striving hard to recover her composure. She is followed closely by the* NURSE, *who remains standing near the entrance.*)

LADY. Thou didst not bring him back? He was not there?

MOTHER. He was not there . . . perchance some business hath detained him. He may have had to ride into the town . . .

LADY (*sighing*). It is so long to wait!

(*Through the open window comes the music of the close of the offices for the dead. During this, the* MOTHER, *involuntarily and mechanically, moves to one of the windows, the* NURSE *stealing after her. The* LADY *sits up, watches them strangely, then slowly rises and walks to the other window, where she stands steadying herself lightly by the sides of the frame, looking off.*)

CELEBRANT (*beneath the window*). Requiem aeternam dona ei, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat ei.

CHOIR. Requiescat in pace. Amen!

CELEBRANT. Anima ejus et animae omnium fidelium defunctorum per misericordiam Dei requiescant in pace.

CHOIR. Amen!

Kyrie eleison!
Christe eleison
Kyrie eleison!

(*The* NURSE, *attracted by a slight sound made by the* LADY, *turns, and seeing her standing there, plucks the* MOTHER'S *sleeve with an expression of alarm.*)

NURSE (*aside*). Look, Madame! There! My Lady! What shall we do? Shall I not call her hastily, and bring the babes?

MOTHER (*aside, heavily*). No, no. Let be. Let be. There's naught to do that can undo what is already done.

(*They move closer to the* LADY.)

LADY (*looking off; she speaks disjointedly, with perplexity at first, then in rising agitation increasing to anxiety and terror, ending with a hysterical cry*). The bearers of the casket all are knights. . . . He was

a knight, then, whom they bury. . . . 'Twas not a poor goodman—he was a knight. The grave is made next to the tombs of the old Lords of Nairn . . . the man was of our kin . . . I did not know there was . . . Where is my lord? I do not see him anywhere among the knights. . . . Wait! Wait! The arms upon the casket—the helmet and the armor —the pennon and the banner . . . are my lord's!

(*She puts out her hands gropingly, turns, reels, and half falls into the arms of the* NURSE, *who places her in the fauteuil.*)

MOTHER. My child! my child! think of your little son—think of the little Lord of Nairn!

CURTAIN

(*As the curtain descends, the words of the requiem come more clearly than at any time before, as if borne on a breath of wind coming through the casement. The "Dominus vobiscum" and the concluding response, especially, are heard with complete distinctness the instant after the curtain is quite down.*)

CELEBRANT.

Domine, exaudi orationem meam
Et clamor meus ad te veniat.
Dominus vobiscum!

CHOIR.

Et cum spiritu tuo!

THE END

THE STONES OF PLOUHINEC

The action takes place in Brittany, at a Christmastide about the end of the seventeenth century, and follows in a general way the story entitled "Les Pierres de Plouhinec," in the "Contes et Legendes de Basse Bretagne" assembled by Emile Souvestre, E. du Laurens de la Barre and F.-M. Luzel, published by the Société des Bibliophiles Bretons, Nantes, 1891.[1] The tradition that once in a century the great megaliths (similar to the alignments of Stonehenge) go down to drink, uncovering treasure recoverable only by the use of a talisman and the sacrifice of a baptized soul, is widespread in Brittany.

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

MARZINN, *a well-to-do Breton peasant.*
ROZENN, *his young sister-in-law.*
BERNEZ, *in love with Rozenn.*
AN OLD BEGGAR.
THE OX.
THE ASS.

ACT I

The interior of MARZINN'S *cottage, on Christmas eve. It is a large room with time- and smoke-blackened walls and ceiling beams, poorly lighted by a swinging lantern and by the flickering glow of a small fire burning in the corner of a huge fireplace which fills*

[1] The same story appears in Souvestre's "Le Foyer Breton," Paris, 1844.

nearly the whole back of the stage. Over the fire hangs a big pot; an immense frying-pan rests by the side of the hearth, its long handle propped against the chimney jamb, and the firelight gleams on a few copper utensils suspended from the rafters. At one side of the room is a closet-bed; a trencher table, dark with time and use, stands near C. *stage, flanked by worn wooden settles. There is a low stool in front of the fire on the side away from the bed, two or three bowls on the table, and a crude image of the Virgin on a sort of bracket on the wall. Doors* R. *and* L., *down stage.*

(*Discovered:* MARZINN, *sprawled on one of the settles, with a tankard in his hand.* BERNEZ, *sitting on the fireside stool, moodily looking into the blaze.*)

MARZINN (*setting the tankard down noisily*). No, my fine lad, no, no! Have done with plaguing me! You shall not marry Roze—you, nor no other man that does not bring a dowry to my liking. I've told you that before. There's naught will change me.

BERNEZ. But, Marzinn, look . . . your wife. (*He turns toward the image of the Virgin, blessing himself.*) Mary Mother, pray for her! . . . your wife was gentle to me, and she knew . . .

MARZINN (*breaking in, with a perfunctory vague repetition of* BERNEZ's *gesture toward the statue*). My wife has naught to do with it. My wife is gone. Her sister is my charge. And look you, boy, what my wife did herself. She did not wed a beggar.

BERNEZ (*hotly*). I am no beggar, Marzinn, and you know it!

MARZINN (*grimly*). No? Well, and you might be richer if you were. A beggar rarely lacks for bite and

sup, or for a stable bed of straw to lay his head. The Virgin and the saints look after him. But—pshaw! A man who picks away at blocks of stone, making them into images that no one wants—who fills his belly for him? The same that buys his carvings—no one! There you are: that much for him—and still less for his wife!

BERNEZ (*excitedly*). You think that—do you—think it of no worth to dream the beauty of the angels and the holy saints, the beauty of the Virgin and her lilies, and to carve that dream so all men see it through the centuries? You have been to Dol, to Quimper, and St. Pol de Léon—seen the cathedrals there whose stones have all been fashioned into flowers of loveliness—and yet you think the hands that did it poorer than a beggar's dirty palm!

MARZINN (*shrugging his shoulders*). Fine! Very fine! But let's come down from your cathedrals' airy spires. Let's talk of something nearer than the centuries. Let's talk about to-day; for if you cannot live to-day, to-morrow, and next week, you'll not do much to last the centuries. Could you, had you a wife, be sure of salting down a pig each year—or could you eat as much black bread as you want—or could you have withal to buy a pair of sabots for her when Laurel Sunday comes?

BERNEZ (*unwillingly*). Why . . . not to-day, and not to-morrow—no. I am not thinking of to-morrow or to-day . . . maybe next year . . . Marzinn! . . . if some great noble saw my work, and if it pleased him . . . if he took me to his court . . . that is the way they often did of old. But all our seigneurs are so busy with the wars!

MARZINN. And meantime you and she could eat the stones, sit on the stones and sleep on stones. There, now—there's your dream! Which of the giant stones

of Plouhinec will be your bride-bed? Which one will you eat?

BERNEZ. But, Marzinn, if some great lord *should* . . .

MARZINN (*breaking in*). Oh, if and if and if! Show me the pigs, the black bread, and a bit of silver for the shoes! *That's* something that a man can understand—something to keep his body harnessed to his soul. But if your body starves, man, where's your spirit? And what becomes of all your dreaming then? No, no; a dowry, boy, a dowry! Let me hear no more of it!

(*Exit* MARZINN. *Enter* ROZENN *from the other side.*)

ROZENN (*anxiously*). What did he say? (*Seeing* BERNEZ *staring fixedly into the fire.*) Oh, Bernez! Then he wouldn't . . .

BERNEZ (*bitterly*). His thoughts are all of pigs and of black bread. He measures life by bellyfuls, and thinks love less account than wooden shoes!

ROZENN. You mean?

BARNEZ. A dowry. He will talk of nothing else. If someone were to give me now a farm, a sty of pigs, and just a little money on the nail, I might be otherwise a boor—a sot—a fool—and he'd say "yes!" The far more lovely thing the Blessed Virgin and the saints have given me—vision to see the beauty in the stone, and fingers that can fashion it—he counts as naught. He has no faith in that, nor has he any faith that 'tis Our Lady and the saints that made us love, and meant us for each other. Oh, Rozenn! If I could but find a way to catch the eye of some rich lord—to show my model for the Virgin's shrine! Could I but find a patron, while there's time! But while I strive, and shake the bars, and wait, some dullwit with a bag of silver crowns will ask for you, and Marzinn will say "yes!"

ROZENN. Marzinn may say it, but he'll not make me! (*Smoothing* BERNEZ's *hair caressingly.*) Poor boy! Poor darling, clever boy! Pray, Bernez, pray and pray and pray the Virgin and the saints; for they who gave the gift will make a way to use it.

BERNEZ (*clasping her hand to his lips, and then holding it against his cheek*). I will. And you will wait? (*With sudden eager hopefulness.*) Rozenn! three times, last night, I had the self-same dream! I saw the shrine, all built; the soaring canopy of carven stone, as fine as lace—the seven slender columns with their lily capitals, harmonious but each one different, showing the seven sorrows transfigured into seven heavenly joys. I saw it!

ROZENN (*confidently*). And I know it will be built! Pray to Our Lady, then, to show the way.

BERNEZ. We both will pray. Oh, I would make it all so beautiful, for her and you! And I will work, and I will dream, and I will fashion into everything the beauty of our love. Each thought, each stroke, shall be a form of greater loveliness, because I do it while I think of you!

(*He kisses her, and they relapse into silence. He continues to look dreamily into the fire, while she, after a moment, stirs the coals and then tries the contents of the pot with a long spoon. Reënter* MARZINN.)

MARZINN. Brrrr! 'Tis cold! And yet my left ear burned—a sign that someone spoke no good of me. I wonder who't could be! (*He looks quizzically at* BERNEZ, *who returns his gaze somewhat defiantly.*) Well—no matter, lad; 'tis Christmas eve. Ye'll take a sup with us. Art ready, Rozennik? (ROZENN, *without answering, fills the bowls and sets them on the table. She*

brings out a loaf of black bread, from which the men cut slices with a huge knife; all cross themselves, looking toward the statue of the Virgin, as they fall to, dipping the slices of bread in the bowls. A knock is heard; all pause, and MARZINN *turns toward the door. As the knock is repeated, he goes and opens the door cautiously, holding the door ajar.*) Who knocks?

BEGGAR (*outside*). A stranger, kindly sir; a stranger seeking alms and shelter.

MARZINN (*after a moment's hesitation, gruffly*). Well—after all—'tis Christmas eve. Come in!

(*Enter the* BEGGAR. *He is swarthy and foreign-looking, with a large hat shading his face and a long, ragged black cloak. He carries a heavy staff.*)

BEGGAR (*unctuously*). I thank you, sir, or sirs—and you, good lady, too. I thank you all!

MARZINN (*still gruffly*). One thank-you is enough. (*He looks disapprovingly at the* BEGGAR, *who sidles over to the fire and stands before it, warming his hands.* ROZENN *and* BERNEZ, *silent and disturbed, keep their eyes fixed on the* BEGGAR. MARZINN, *behind the stranger's back, attracts* ROZENN'S *attention and looks at her inquiringly, jerking his thumb slightly toward the old man. She responds by a slight but emphatic shake of her head.* MARZINN, *aside, to* ROZENN.) Still, after all, 'tis Christmas eve. Who knows what visitors may be abroad, or in what shape they come? (*Aloud.*) Rozenn, another bowl! Sup with us, stranger, in the name of . . . (*He turns to the figure of the Virgin, raising his hand to make the sign of the cross, but his words are lost and the gesture is arrested by a great clatter as the* BEGGAR *trips over the stool and drops his staff. The* BEGGAR *is the first to recover himself, tak-*

ing a place on the settle and cutting himself a great slice of bread as ROZENN *fills the bowl. He falls to greedily, as the others exchange disturbed looks. After a short silence* MARZINN *adds:*) You have come far?

BEGGAR. Very far.

BERNEZ (*after another silent pause*). Then you have been a long time on the road?

BEGGAR. Yes; I have been a long time on the road. A long, long time.

MARZINN. And whither are you bound?

BEGGAR. Oh, on and on and on! (*For a moment he looks fixedly into space; then he goes on eating greedily. He drains the bowl and stuffs the remnants of the bread into a ragged wallet. Then he turns again fawningly to* MARZINN.) And now, kind sir, have you a corner where an old, old man can pass the night?

(ROZENN *makes vigorous negative signs to* MARZINN, *who hesitates; then, aside.*)

MARZINN (*aside*). But, after all, who knows? 'Tis Christmas eve! (*Aloud.*) Listen, old man; I have no other bed, but I can give you what They had in Bethlehem—and glad They were to get it. Come; there is still the stable and the straw. And if St. Joseph and the Holy . . . (*His words are again lost as the old man, hastily rising, drops his staff and upsets the settle. The others exchange startled looks. Suspiciously.*) It seems that you are rather awkward, friend!

BEGGAR (*fawningly again*). Your pardon, sir. My limbs are stiff with cold.

MARZINN. Well—come. 'Tis Christmas eve. Mayhap that you can warm them in the straw. Come on, old man—this way!

(*Exit* MARZINN, *followed by the* BEGGAR, *who turns his back on the statue of the Virgin and makes an extravagant obeisance to* ROZENN.)

ROZENN (*looking after them apprehensively*). I am afraid. I do not like that man.

BERNEZ (*doubtfully*). Nor I. (*More confidently.*) But be he man, Marzinn could handle seven such as he; and be he not, Christians have naught to fear this night. Kiss me, Rozenn. (*They kiss.*) Again, ere Marzinn comes! (*They kiss again, and he releases her. Re-enter* MARZINN.) Good-night, Marzinn.

MARZINN (*abstractedly*). Good-night—good-night!

(*Exit* BERNEZ. MARZINN *stands looking silently into the fire.* ROZENN, *sinking on her knees before the statue of the Virgin, begins to tell her beads, murmuring softly.*)

CURTAIN

END OF ACT I

ACT II

Midnight before Christmas.

(*The interior of* MARZINN'S *stable. It is lighted by the moon, which throws a flood of light through the open door, the back being lost in deep shadow. The* OX *and the* ASS *are lying side by side in the straw, just far enough apart for the* BEGGAR *to sleep between them, propped against their bodies for warmth. He is muffled in his cloak, his hat pulled down over his face, his head dropped forward. Occasionally he snores. The* ASS *seems*

restless; from time to time he turns his eyes and ears toward the Ox, *which stolidly chews the cud. Presently a belfry clock in the distance is heard striking twelve. As the strokes proceed, the* Beggar *furtively lifts his head and opens his eyes, without otherwise stirring. At the last stroke the* Ass *excitedly begins to bray, his braying changing almost at once to speech.*)

Ass. Hee—ha-a-a-w! He—ah, ah,—ummmm. Friend Ox, the hour has struck!

Ox. The hour has struck, indeed. My ears are not as long as yours, I know, but still I heard it.

Ass. I have been listening, it seems to me, for all the twelvemonth since we talked before. 'Tis strange that just this night, from midnight until cockcrow, we can speak—and then we're dumb again. And yet, the whole year long, I try so hard!

Ox. You always speak, it seems to me, as well as most men do.

Ass (*flattered*). You think so, really?

Ox. Why, yes—I think so. What you say is just as good. Your voice is somewhat stronger—that is all.

Ass. Why don't you try, yourself, sometimes, M. Ker-Meuglant?

Ox. Well, when I hear so much that's said that should not have been said, it seems to me the better plan would be that men, too, should not speak except on Christmas eve.

Ass. They have a foolish-sounding way of talking, surely!

Ox. And now, another thing: it's little use the Trinity should give us speech this one night in the year, rewarding us for what our forebears did when Christ was born, if an old reprobate like this can overhear.

(*The* Beggar, *who has been listening more and more openly, suddenly sinks down and feigns deep sleep, snoring once or twice ostentatiously as the* Ox *and the* Ass *turn their eyes and heads to look at him.*)

Ass. You know him, then?

Ox. An evil-doer, seeking service with the devil. He tries to win his favor with some spells he's learned.

Ass. What kind of spells?

Ox. Blasting the corn and barley in the ear—bringing a murrain on the cattle—making cows drop their calves, and peddling magic herbs to stir up strife.

Ass (*cocking his head in delight at the scandalous gossip*). Does he do worse things yet?

Ox. They say he can call up the lesser goblins, but that the Big One will not come.

Ass (*awestruck*). You mean . . . the Arch-Fiend? (Ox *nods affirmatively.* Ass, *slanting his eyes and ears toward the* Beggar.) He is not one of them himself?

Ox. No—and that's just where it is. He is a man who was baptized. He is a renegade, but not yet pledged completely to the devil.

Ass. What does he want to call the Old Man for?

Ox. To drive a thrifty bargain for his soul; but Old Nick is too sharp.

Ass (*puzzled*). How's that—too sharp? I thought he wanted souls.

Ox. He does; that's true. But then, he thinks he need but wait a little while to get this one here (*Nodding his head toward the* Beggar.) cheaper in the end.

Ass. So—that's the kind he is!

Ox. So that's the kind he is. Great company this night for you and me!

(*Both gaze at the* Beggar, *who snores loudly.*)

Ass. You're jealous for your honor, Cousin Ox. I have still better reason to complain, seeing the head of my own clan bore Jesus on his back into Jerusalem, and we all bear the cross there to this day. You see, it happened thus:

(*The* Ass *seems to be preparing to tell a long story, but the* Ox *hastily heads him off.*)

Ox. Yes, yes! I know—I know!

Ass (*disappointedly*). Oh! Do you? Well . . . (*Sighs.*) Well! As for me, what the Three Persons send my way, I take without complaint. (*Lays his ears meekly backward; then, looking closely at the* Beggar, *he adds more briskly.*) And anyway, the old scamp is asleep.

(*The* Beggar *snores regularly and loudly. During the following scene the beasts occasionally look at him closely before and after speaking.*)

Ox. And all his sorceries have done him little good. Look at his rags!

Ass. He doesn't look well paid.

Ox. His prince, the devil, has not even told him of the chance to win a fortune just now at his hand.

(*The* Beggar, *startled, almost betrays himself, resuming his pretence of sleep just in time to avoid detection.*)

Ass. What fortune?

Ox. What! Don't you know that once in every hundred years the Standing Stones of Plouhinec go down to Intil stream—go down to drink?

Ass. Yes—my old grandsire said he saw them once. But what of that?

Ox. At midnight, when they seek the river's bank, they leave uncovered all the wealth they guard, silver and gold and jewels inexhaustible.

Ass. At midnight? When—what midnight will that be?

Ox. The midnight of the great midwinter moon.

Ass. That's one day more.

Ox. One day. The moon has one day more to wax. To-morrow night the hundred years are up. The stones will move.

Ass (*becoming excited*). And any man could help himself, if he were there?

Ox. He could. But there's another thing the man must know. Swift as they went . . . (*In a fearful whisper.*) the stones come back again!

Ass. Well . . . then?

Ox. They'd crush the treasure-seeker like an egg—grind him to a red jelly, soaked into the ground and covered with a thousand tons of rock—unless he holds aloft the pagan talisman.

Ass. What is the talisman?

Ox. A branch of cross-plant, with the five-leaved clover.

Ass. He would be safe with that?

Ox. He would. It is the symbol of the ancient gods, whose temples were these stones. They must obey it.

Ass. So then the stones would all return to place, and he could take the treasure off with him.

Ox. Ah! That's where the devil put *his* finger in! (*Impressively.*) The treasure afterwards would turn to dust—crumble to nothing—vanish, disappear and fly away—unless the finder give a baptized soul in trade. Blood is the devil's price, and he who keeps the hoard must see he gets it.

Ass. His own soul?

Ox. No—another life. The devil hopes that thus he may get two.

Ass. How came the treasure there?

Ox (*settling down to a long history*). Three thousand years ago, when Solomon was king in old Jerusalem, and Hiram's galleys, charged with gold and gems, came winging home from Africa, a caravan set out . . . (*As the* Ox *launches out on these lines, the curtain descends swiftly, cutting off his words. It remains down a few seconds, to indicate the passing of some hours, and rises to discover the* Ox *still talking and the* Ass *fast asleep. The moonlight has given place to gray light of dawn. As the curtain rises.*) . . . so that is how the treasure came to Plouhinec, and that is why the stones go down to drink that one night only every hundred years, and that is why . . . (*A cock crows loudly. The* Ox, *startled, turns toward the* Ass, *which has wakened suddenly and returns his gaze.*) Mooo-oo-oo!

Ass. Hee-e-e-e-e-e-e haw-aw-aw-aw!

Beggar (*rising and stretching himself*). Heigh ho! . . . Well! Our little talk is ended. What a pity! And so Old Nick has wasted all this time to get me cheaper, has he? Well, he has played a losing game—thanks, my good friends, to you! (*He bows extravagantly to the* Ox *and the* Ass, *who exchange solemn looks.* Beggar, *resuming.*) Now for the five-leaved clover. The time is short. I'll seek it on some sunny bank across the moors. But wait . . . that baptized soul . . . pshaw! that's an easy task. No trick at all to snare a human soul with treasure as a bait. Just get some simple fool to come along—I'll have the only five-leaved clover—(*He sets up one finger and makes a gesture of crushing it out with the other*

hand.) that's the game to play! H'mmmm! I think I know just where to find the man. (*More briskly.*) First get the five-leaved clover safe in hand and then—come on, Old Gentleman in Black, and start the play. You first—your move: "the Stones of Plouhinec to Intil stream!" Good: I'll mate you in two moves. Mate in two moves! (*Exultantly.*) Mate in two moves! Mate in two moves! [*Exit* BEGGAR.

CURTAIN

END OF ACT II

ACT III

SCENE 1

Afternoon of Christmas Day.

The alignments, Plouhinec; a wide moor, across which the rows of crude megaliths stretch in irregular lines to the far distance. Two or three of the largest stones stand out in the foreground. On the leading one, well down stage and somewhat to one side, BERNEZ *is carving a* (*Celtic*) *cross—an intaglio figure on the face of the rock.*

(*Discovered:* BERNEZ [*as above*]. *Enter the* BEGGAR. *He catches sight of the work and hastily moves to a spot from which the cross cannot be seen; at the same time he hides under his cloak a green spray he is carrying.*)

BEGGAR. What are you doing there?

BERNEZ (*without looking up*). You see.

BEGGAR. What is it for?

BERNEZ (*stepping back to look critically at his work*).

Why . . . being out of work just now, I thought the cutting of the cross upon this stone might be a thing acceptable to God.

BEGGAR. You're wanting something of Him, then?

BERNEZ (*continuing to study his carving*). All Christians want salvation for their souls.

BEGGAR (*slyly*). Nothing but that? Nothing about Rozenn?

BERNEZ (*turning and looking at the* BEGGAR). Ah! You know of that? What do you know of that? Well —anyway, 'tis neither sin nor shame. I only want to lead her to the curé.

BEGGAR. Then why not do so?

BERNEZ (*heatedly*). Why? Why? Because her brother asks more silver crowns, by way of dowry, than I have common sous.

BEGGAR (*mysteriously*). Come over on this side—come over here! (BERNEZ *moves, slowly and suspiciously, a little nearer to him. Same manner.*) Listen: suppose I give you, or I get you for your own, more golden Louis than he wants of silver crowns? Suppose I could do that? Eh, what?

BERNEZ (*incredulously*). You! (*After a pause, suspiciously.*) What do you want for them?

BEGGAR (*soothingly*). Only a little remembrance in your prayers.

BERNEZ. Nothing to hurt my soul?

BEGGAR. Nothing. Courage is all you need.

BERNEZ. Then tell me—tell me quickly! For I want Rozenn more than I want life. The risk of death is naught, if past it lies the way to marry her!

BEGGAR. Softly—softly a little, first, my lad. Tell me; if you had all the silver you could wish—what would you do with it?

BERNEZ. When I have all the silver heart could ask,

I'll give my Rozenn everything she wants, from linen to brocade, from bread to pomegranates.

BEGGAR. And when to that is added all the gold . . .?

BERNEZ. When I have all the gold of my desire, I will enrich her family and all she loves, out to the borders where the parish ends.

BEGGAR. And all the jewels . . . ?

BERNEZ. When I have all the jewels of my dreams, I'll make the whole world rich and light of heart, and tell them 'tis Rozenn would have it so.

BEGGAR. Anything more?

BERNEZ. Yes—more! Far more! For when I have the wealth at my command, I'll build the Virgin such a beauteous shrine that for a thousand years the world will marvel at it.

BEGGAR. Ah! So, it seems then, you have only to begin. Once get the treasure, all the rest runs smooth, eh? Come nearer, then, lest someone hear. (BERNEZ *still showing some aversion follows the* BEGGAR, *who moves as far as possible from the stone. As he talks, he occasionally looks furtively over his shoulder at the nearest menhir, as if fearing it might be listening to what he is saying.*) Hearken, boy, well to what I have to say, and do not speak too loud. To-night at midnight, all these stones go down to drink. It is a hundred years since they have gone; 'twill be another hundred ere they go again. But when they go, each one of them uncovers vaults of such treasure as none ever saw, not since the days of great King Solomon. All that we need to do is help ourselves. The wealth belongs to no one; 'twill be ours by right. What do you say?

BERNEZ. Why do you tell me? That I do not see, when you could take the whole thing for your own.

BEGGAR (*with feigned admiration*). A fine, shrewd question, that! I see I judged you right. I see I'm

dealing with a clever man. Well, now, my lad *(Pathetically.)* I might say that I am a desolate old man, with no son of my own, and having sensed a mighty fancy for you . . . (BERNEZ *laughs sarcastically. Breaking off suddenly and recommencing in a wholly different, businesslike tone.)* I *might* say that, I said,—but never to so shrewd a lad as you. No, no! I'll tell you true. I *am* an old man, slow upon my feet. The time to work is short. If I went fumbling, stumbling in the dark, I might get little wealth for all my pains. You have young eyes, young feet. You'll fly about and reap the field—gather the crop ere I could cut one swath. Now, all I ask is share and share alike. You'll bring the most to pot—that's true; but you'd have none at all had I not told you. I've told you, then, because I need your legs; and for their use, I've made you equal partner in a treasure-trove such as was never seen in Brittany—nay, nor in France. Is that not fair enough?

BERNEZ *(convinced)*. It's fair, old man—it's fair. And I will play as fair with you as you play fair with me.

BEGGAR. Then you'll be here at midnight?

BERNEZ. Long before! I'll go and get the sacks—then I'll come back. I must complete the carving of this cross. That done, I'll wait until you come. *(Ecstatically.)* Oh, Rozenn! Oh, my shrine!

(Exit BERNEZ, *singing. The* BEGGAR *looks after him until the singing is no longer heard; then he turns, and his eyes slowly travel over the standing menhirs and over the ground around him.)*

BEGGAR. I wonder which one it will be, and where? *(Hastily takes the five-leaved clover talisman from under his cloak and clutches it to his breast. Looks at the menhirs again, especially the one on which* BERNEZ *was*

working. Speaks.) Perhaps the very one he carved will . . . (*Makes a gesture of smashing.*) Perhaps . . . perhaps he's carved his own . . . that would be a joke! (*Chuckles. Looks about again.*) I wonder which 'twill be! I wonder where!

(*Exit* BEGGAR, *still looking about and muttering.*)

CURTAIN

END OF SCENE 1

SCENE 2

The same, near midnight. The alignments in the moonlight.

(*Discovered: the* BEGGAR, BERNEZ. *The* BEGGAR *seems to be asleep, his head on a pile of sacks, near center stage.* BERNEZ *sits near him, with his hands clasped around his knees, looking up at the stars. Presently he springs to his feet, throwing out his arms.*)

BERNEZ (*ecstatically*). Rozenn! My shrine! (*He moves swiftly, restlessly, first to one side and then to the other, touching the menhirs as he passes them. As he returns to centre stage, the* BEGGAR *looks up.*) It must be nearly midnight. The way the wind is, we should hear the chimes.

BEGGAR. We'll not need to hear the chimes to know the hour. Now, once again: I'll take the near ones—you can take the far. Bring in each sack when it is full. I'll keep them safe, if anyone should come. Don't stay too long. . . . Hark! What was that? (*A low rumble, like distant thunder, begins to sound, and at the*

same instant comes the first stroke of midnight. The rumble increases, and the megaliths begin to stir.) Quick! Out of the way and let them pass! (*He seizes* BERNEZ *and drags him far down stage, to one side. With weird noises and strange movement of flying shadows the stones go swiftly past and the roaring and pounding die away. Sharply.*) Quick, now—to work! Work fast! Work fast! Work fast! (*His voice shrills with excitement.* BERNEZ *darts off stage with a bunch of empty sacks, returning in a few moments with a full one* [*ad lib.*]. The BEGGAR *jumps into the spot where the nearest menhir stood, throwing out something that chinks and glitters.*) Gold, gold, gold, and rubies large as eggs! (BERNEZ *rushes in with another sack, and dashes off again.*) Good lad! Good lad! Another, now—another! (BEGGAR *rises, moves to the side of the stage where the stones went off, and listens. As he turns back.*) It was a good move, that, enlisting him. There'll be ten times what I could get alone. But now, the thing's to watch him close. 'Twould be a bitter loss to have them catch him with a bag full, and bury all at once! No, no! When he goes, he'll go with empty hands. (*A short, distant rumble comes from the side where the stones are supposed to be.*) Bernez! To me! To me! Quick—they are coming back!

(BERNEZ *reënters, dragging a heavy sack, dishevelled and panting. The* BEGGAR, *ignoring him, drags the sacks far down stage. The rumble, still distant, begins to take on a rhythmic movement like an enormous march step. Then it almost dies away again, as if the sound were cut off by some intervening obstacle.*)

BERNEZ (*anxiously*). What shall we do now? How shall we get away? The treasure is too heavy.

BEGGAR. Get away? How can you get away?

BERNEZ. Hide the sacks, and run.

BEGGAR. *Run?* There's no runner could escape those stones. They'd catch the very goshawk in the air.

BERNEZ. Then tell me quickly what we are to do. You said there was no danger courage could not meet.

BEGGAR. There is no danger, with the talisman. Just hold it out; the stones will pass you by.

BERNEZ. Talisman? What talisman? You never spoke of any talisman!

BEGGAR. Oh—did I not? I must have overlooked it. Why, you should have a sprig of cross-plant, with a five-leaved clover.

BERNEZ. Give it me.

BEGGAR. Sorry—I cannot. I have only one.

BERNEZ. You devil!

(*He leaps upon the old man and they struggle. The tramp of the returning stones rapidly grows louder, accompanied by rumbling of thunder. By a tremendous effort, the* BEGGAR *hurls* BERNEZ *from him, and with a wild cry he waves the talisman over his own head.* BERNEZ *reels across the stage and falls on the far side of the spot on which the cross-marked megalith stood. This is the first one of the stones to return. Ignoring the* BEGGAR, *it advances toward* BERNEZ, *who rises and faces it with folded arms. The cross he carved begins to glow with a soft white light; and the stone, just before it reaches* BERNEZ, *stops and stands as a barrier in front of him, by which the following megaliths are parted in two streams, leaving* BERNEZ *unscathed. When they have all passed, the glowing cross fades out again. The other*

stones, meanwhile, have all swerved by the BEGGAR, *deflected by the talisman which he has been waving over his head. Intent on eyeing them, he has not looked toward* BERNEZ. *As quiet returns, he still stands looking off toward the side from which the stones returned.*)

BEGGAR (*exultantly*). Mated, Beelzebub, just as I said—and mated in two moves! Move one, the talisman; that balked your devil stones on their move back. Move two, the baptized soul that wins the treasure. Check—check, old gentleman—and this time it is mate. Mate in two moves! (*He turns, chuckling, and sees* BERNEZ, *standing safe beyond the protecting menhir. Shrieking.*) There—there he stands! That is the baptized soul! What! All the fiends of hell! Crush him! (*Waving the talisman over his head.*) I bid you crush him! (*The cross-carved menhir remains motionless, but the figure of the cross begins to glow with a sinister fiery red light. The* BEGGAR *staggers back. Choking.*) The cross that Bernez cut baptized the stone. 'Tis Christian now—the talisman is useless. I never thought of that!

(*The menhir begins to move slowly toward the* BEGGAR. *He backs stumblingly away, with muffled gasps, circling around toward* BERNEZ, *the menhir sweeping after him with increasing speed. As the* BEGGAR *reaches the spot where the stone first stood, he falls. The menhir leaps instantly upon him; a terrible grinding sound is heard as it settles into place; then all is still. The light of the cross dies out again.*)

BERNEZ. Oh, Holy Virgin and the saints, surround me; for this must be the very gate of hell! And as for

this (*Kicking the nearest bag of treasure.*)—would God that it were back again! I fear to touch it. It may be the mintage of the pit. . . . And yet—the Virgin heard me when I told my plans—what I would do if I were given the treasure . . . to make the whole world rich and glad . . . and then, the shrine . . . that was a vow . . . then the old Beggar's devil plans baffled by this Christian stone . . . a miracle! Dear Virgin Mother, what am I to do? (*The cross begins to glow again with its soft light which rises to full radiance and then slowly dies away. Joyously.*) A sign! a sign! Rozenn—Rozenn—Rozenn! (*He seizes one of the sacks and runs off.*)

CURTAIN

A PSYCHOTHERAPIST

A chapter of fictitious history, the plot being based on that of a Spanish so-called fairy-tale by J. Munoz Escamez. Fairy-stories of course do not even pretend to be true. Great liberties have been taken with the work of Señor Escamez, and for the introduction and irreverent use of sundry texts of Hippocrates he is not chargeable in any degree whatever. The dramatist, in turn, shifts the responsibility to the characters in the play.

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

TWO LORDS OF CEREMONIES.
KING OF KER-IS.
FOUR DOCTORS.
THE QUACK.
FIVE INVALIDS.
PRINCE ROYAL OF KER-IS.

SCENE 1

The scene is laid in, say, the court of Ker-Is, before that kingdom sank into the sea. The time is legendary; the costumes what you will. The setting, which is the KING'S *council-chamber, may be designed by anyone familiar—or confidently presented to any audience unfamiliar—with the style of the period. The only essential is that there should be five chairs in the first scene, and five cots or litters, a screen and a stool, in the second.*

(*Discovered: the two* LORDS OF CEREMONIES, *arranging the council-chamber.*)

First Lord (*with a profound sigh*). Poor, poor young man! (*Sharply, to* Second Lord.) Here, here —don't place the chairs that way!

Second Lord (*weeping into his handkerchief*). Ah! Ah! (*Acidly, to* First Lord.) And pray, why not? How would you have them placed? (*Dabbing his eyes again.*) Oh, most unfortunate and infinitely-to-be-pitied prince!

First Lord (*dejectedly, wringing his hands and staring into vacancy*). No sign of any cure! My heart is riven with compassion! (*Scornfully, to* Second Lord.) Have you forgotten this is for a consultation of the doctors? Put them so far apart they cannot reach each others' eyes!

Second Lord (*sniffing dismally, and putting away his handkerchief—then indifferently, to* First Lord). What difference? They'll spring up from their chairs, or get to throwing instruments, in any case! (*He nevertheless spaces the chairs more widely.*)

First Lord (*sarcastically*). At least, they can't make one another take their own prescriptions!

Second Lord (*after looking off cautiously, both sides*). There's no one listening. What is it, think you, ails the prince?

First Lord. Some kind of settled melancholy, if you know what that is.

Second Lord. Does anyone?

First Lord. Of course not; and that's why the doctors all can be so sure.

Second Lord. That's *why? What* why?

First Lord. The less proof one can find for his belief, the fiercer he will fight for it; and if he have no proof at all, his faith grows actually murderous.

Second Lord. But if they all agree 'tis melancholy, why should they fight?

First Lord. Because they absolutely *dis*agree what melancholy is.

Second Lord. This consultation, then, is with the hope of reaching an agreement?

First Lord. The king hopes, yes; but it will only deepen and increase the disagreement.

Second Lord. Poor king!

First Lord. You see, the prince's case has baffled each doctor separately.

Second Lord. Poor prince!

First Lord. The king hopes they can solve it all together.

Second Lord. Yes.

First Lord. Well—will four empty bottles make one full one?

Second Lord (*doubtfully*). No . . . but . . .

First Lord. Besides, each doctor, having failed to cure the prince, will fight to death another who might cure him. He must, to save his own great reputation. So there you are. There is your consultation.

Second Lord. I know what I should do if I were king.

First Lord. Of course, and so do I.

Second Lord. Eh, what? What is it, then?

First Lord. Why, govern very badly. All kings do.

Second Lord. But I don't think I should.

First Lord. Of course not; as no king ever does.

Second Lord. In any case, that is not what I mean. I mean about the prince.

First Lord. What would you do, then?

Second Lord. I would call in the Quack.

First Lord. You mean that long-haired one who goes about beating a drum?

Second Lord. The same.

First Lord. The fellow who sets up a smoky torch and sells his nostrums in the market-place?

Second Lord. That one.

First Lord. You buy two flasks of something good for all maladies of stomach, liver, kidneys, lungs and eyesight, vapors and humors, scurvy, the falling sickness, toothache, king's evil, leprosy, deafness, rheumatism and the plague, and he presents you with a third, free gratis, warranted to cure baldness?

Second Lord. The very man.

First Lord. Pshaw!

Second Lord. "Pshaw," if you like. He's worked some wondrous cures.

First Lord. He does not know the simplest rules of practise.

Second Lord. I'd call him, though. I'd rather have my son get well by rule of thumb than have him stay forever, ever so scientifically, ill.

First Lord. An ignoramus, quite illiterate, incompetent . . .

Second Lord. The broken bones he cured were quite as literate as an astronomer's; the fevers were as competent as yours or mine.

First Lord. The man's a mountebank—a charlatan—a trafficker in hocus-pocus.

Second Lord. Nevertheless, he heals.

First Lord. A fraud—a faker.

Second Lord. But the cures are real.

First Lord. A vagrant—an empiric—an Egyptian . . .

Second Lord. And they stay cured.

First Lord. A . . . a . . . a . . .

Second Lord. You've used up all the words and have not changed the fact that he succeeds.

First Lord. Hunnnnnnh!

SECOND LORD. You say the doctors can do nothing. He cannot do less.

FIRST LORD. H'mmmm . . . and you would call him in?

SECOND LORD. I would.

FIRST LORD. Well—as you say . . . proven the doctors cannot . . .

SECOND LORD. Shall we propose it to the king?

FIRST LORD. Oh, not before the consultation. Wait for the consultation. . . . Here come the doctors now. The king is with them.

(*The two lords fall back respectfully. Enter the* KING, *preceding the* FOUR DOCTORS *in single file. He crosses and takes a chair on the side opposite the entrance, flanked by the two* LORDS OF CEREMONIES, *standing. When he has been seated, the* DOCTORS *sit in a curving row facing him. They are all bearded and more or less bald; their movements are made with great ceremony and assumption of extreme dignity. The* FIRST DOCTOR, *who is slightly senile, carries a large book; the* SECOND, *an array of bottles in some sort of rack; the* THIRD, *a huge black bag; the* FOURTH, *who is somewhat younger than the rest, an open case of instruments. As each one speaks in the ensuing scene, the others, under an air of formal respect, show signs of disapproval, dissent, and contempt, which become more emphatic and unrestrained as the scene proceeds.*)

KING (*after ritual of seating is completed*). Proceed, sirs; we are listening. (*To* FIRST DOCTOR.) And you, sir, as you are the dean in years, will you begin?

FIRST DOCTOR (*rising and bowing to the* KING). Sir! and (*Bowing to the other consultants, who rise and*

bow, seriatim.) distinguished colleagues! The diagnosis, as it seems to me, is obvious; (*All the* DOCTORS *nod.*) and given diagnosis, treatment follows by invariable law. (*The other* DOCTORS *make gestures of doubt.*) The prince is suffering from a melancholy; and "melancholy," I need hardly say to brethren learned in the Greek—the very term or designation "melancholy," comes from two words which, in the vulgar tongue, mean "black" and "bile." We have to deal, then, with the bile—that is, the liver. (*Indications of active dissent on the part of all the other* DOCTORS.) We may at once exclude those maladies known as acute, called by the Ancients peripneumonia, pleurisy, causus, lethargus or phrenitis, and all the sicknesses derived therefrom. We have to deal with a hepatic, witnessed by pains, by chills and perturbations, leading, if uncontrolled, to carus, and . . .

FOURTH DOCTOR (*interrupting*). No!

FIRST DOCTOR (*glaring at* FOURTH). Yes! (FOURTH DOCTOR *subsides, growling.* FIRST *resumes.*) Our sovereign remedy, then, is the *ptisane* (*Disgust displayed by the other three* DOCTORS.) which, being by its nature mucilaginous, emollient and non-alterative, yielding most readily to coction, and entirely non-adherent, descending in a direct line through the thorax, passes immediately to digestion and by its lubricative action soon restores the liver to the normal. But whether the ptisane be filtered or unfiltered, or whether change from strained to unstrained be made the fifth day, or the seventh, or the ninth—that we may discuss.

(*He bows to the* KING, *then to the other* DOCTORS, *and sits.*)

KING (*to* SECOND DOCTOR). You, sir; will you now take up the word?

SECOND DOCTOR (*bowing to the* KING). Your Majesty! and learned fellows! (*Bowing to the other* DOCTORS, *who bow in return as before.*) I have listened to our colleague's words with great respect—the most profound respect that can be given to a view which is, of course, entirely wrong. (*Delighted assent from* THIRD *and* FOURTH DOCTORS *and angry dumb protest from* FIRST.) The prince's malady is hypochondria; the hypochondrium, and not the liver, is at fault. (*Dissent from all the other* DOCTORS.) And what, in substance, is this wonderful ptisane? In vulgar language, it is barley gruel. And shall we use a mucilaginous—a mild emollient or a softly lubricative medium—a sticky, slippery mess—to seize and rectify a hostile hypochondrium? (*Vigorous affirmation from* FIRST DOCTOR—*equally vigorous negation from the other two.*) No, sirs; we must resort to sterner measures!

FOURTH DOCTOR. Yes, yes! Much sterner! We must . . .

SECOND DOCTOR (*to* FOURTH, *cutting him off short*). Wait, will you? Wait until your turn! (*Resumes.*) The case, your Majesty and sirs, calls for medication. We must administer black hellebore, euphorbia, daucus of Crete and seseli of Crete, cumin and anis and juice of asafœtida!

(*Horror on the part of all the other* DOCTORS.)

FIRST and THIRD DOCTORS (*interrupting in chorus*). Horse medicine!

SECOND DOCTOR (*resuming, and sounding the "p" in ptisane to emphasize his complete contempt*). *P*tisane! What does the Master say concerning the administration of *p*tisane in cases where the functions are inactive? Here—give me the book! (*Takes the book from the* FIRST DOCTOR, *finds a place, and reads.*)

H'mmm . . . ah—here it is: "If ptisane be given" . . . h'mm . . . yes—"the pains will be increased if they exist already, or be set up at once if they did not exist. The respiration will be quickened, which is bad, for it dries up the lung and doth exhaust the hypochondrium"—mark you, exhausts the hypochondrium, which is already in disorder—(*Reads again.*) h'mmmmm . . . "it is for these causes" . . . h'mmmm . . . "that those who take the ptisane whole perish the seventh day or sooner, some falling into delirium, others being suffocated by orthopnea." (*To the* KING.) Sir, do you wish your son to perish the seventh day, or sooner, by falling into delirium, or even from suffocation by an orthopnea?

FIRST DOCTOR. Stop! Stop! the doctor has misquoted! That only supervenes—look at the book—that only supervenes for those who take the ptisane *whole.* I spoke distinctly of its being filtered—strained, if you will. Here—give me the book! (*Snatches it.*) Listen: "The real cause is these persons died before the pain was dissipated because they just ran out of breath" . . . h'mmmm . . . yes . . . "these accidents occur only if one use ptisane unseasonably, but *especially*" . . . mark well, I pray you, that "especially" . . . "*especially* if one eat or drink things less suitable than the ptisane." And such things, your Majesty and sirs—such things less suitable than the ptisane—are hellebore and—er—euphorbia, and daucus and the juice of asafœtida!

(*Lively assent from* THIRD *and* FOURTH DOCTORS *and vigorous dissent from* SECOND.)

SECOND DOCTOR. Here, here! Who is misquoting now? Those last words are not in the book. Give it me back! (*He tries to seize it.*)

First Doctor (*holding fast to the book, as they struggle*). No! Those last words are not in the book! They are in common sense and in the art of medicine. No wonder, therefore, that the doctor did not recognize them.

(*They glare at each other as if about to grapple.*)

King (*intervening*). Sirs! Sirs! Wait until the rest have spoken. We may find reconcilement on another view. (*To* Third Doctor.) You, sir, in turn—will you express yourself?

Third Doctor (*after same business of bowing all around*). Readily, Sire. The difficulty is, as I shall show, that both the learned gentlemen are absolutely wrong. (*Ecstatic approval of* Fourth Doctor *and angry protest from* First *and* Second.) The prince's malady, as anyone might see, is an unhappy humor; and that, because the humors of the body, rising, become congested in the head instead of passing as—as they should pass. The remedy is obvious: to flood them out with liquids and assist their exhalation through the skin by fomentations. (*Murmurs, movements and groans of dissent from all the other doctors.*) Water and wine, and hydromel and oxymel, juices of herbs, decoctions made from raisins, olive pulp and wheat, from safflower, myrtle berries, pomegranate seeds—these will work a cure. (*All the other* Doctors *shake their heads disgustedly.*) And with them we should offer fomentations . . . where is the book? Here—give me the book! (*He seizes it against the resistance of the* First Doctor, *turns the pages and reads.*) "When a pain in the side comes on" . . . . h'mmmm . . . yes . . . "try to dissipate it by warm fomentations" . . . and he proposes (*The* Doctor *follows the text with his finger, reading here*

and there as he comes to the words he wants.) "hot water in a leather bottle or a bladder" . . . "a sponge, wrung out of boiling water, covered by a cloth" . . . or "bags of barley or of lentils—bruised and steeped in strong vinegar," or "filled with salt and sorghum, very hot, and pressed against the side" . . .

FOURTH DOCTOR (*leaping up and wrenching the book from the* THIRD DOCTOR'S *hands as he interrupts him; to the* KING). Your pardon, sire! I cannot have you thus misled! My very learned brother seeks to hide the vital portion of the text. Let *me* now read: h'mmmm . . . here it is! "but if the pain do not yield to the fomentations, they *must not be continued*, for then they dry the lung and do invite a suppuration." And does your Majesty desire to dry the prince's lung, or to invite a suppuration? No; I thought not. Then why run the risk? The surer method follows. I will read again: "but if the pain move toward the clavicle, or if a heaviness be felt, whether it be beneath the arm, or toward the breast, or underneath the diaphragm, *open the vein within the hollow of the elbow, and do not hesitate to draw the blood until it runs vermilion.*" There, sir. Now I propose . . .

FIRST DOCTOR (*interrupting, seizing the book and reading*). And as for liquids, listen well to this; the Master's words, remember! "Water is bad for hypochondriacs. It is detestable, most bilious, and especially when it arrives in empty organs . . . it inflates the spleen and liver whene'er those organs are already heated, and . . .

FOURTH DOCTOR (*clutching the book*). Here, sir, you had your turn! Sit down and wait till I have finished. Sit *down*, I say! (*Menacingly; the* FIRST DOCTOR *subsides reluctantly, but manages to keep the book.* FOURTH DOCTOR *resumes, to the* KING.) But all this

is beside the mark, your Majesty, for all so far are wrong. The Prince is blue because, saving your Majesty, his blood is all too blue. Much, much too blue!

First Doctor (*half aside*). Rubbish!

(Second *and* Third Doctors *grunt disgustedly.*)

Fourth Doctor (*aggressively*). I say 'tis much too blue! Will ptisane turn it red? (First Doctor *nods vehemently, the others shaking their heads.*) Or hydromel and oxymel, or bellywash of seeds of pomegranates? (Third Doctor *nods vigorously, the others dissenting.*) Or can you turn it red by pumping in black hellebore, euphorbia, and juice of asafœtida?

Second Doctor. Yes, yes!

First and Third Doctors (*simultaneously*). No! No!

Fourth Doctor. You cannot. A pitiable argument has been made by those who trust in medicines.

First, Second and Third Doctors (*in chorus*). Pitiable? How, pitiable? Why pitiable?

Fourth Doctor. Yes, pitiable—most pitiable. What have they done so far with all their medicines and all their medications? Exactly nothing! Then here—the precept that should govern . . . *Give me that book.* (*He grasps it again and wrenches it from the hold of the* First Doctor, *turns the pages excitedly, and reads.*) "That which no medicine doth cure, the knife doth cure; what the knife doth not cure, the fire will cure; what cautery doth not cure, must be regarded as incurable." (*He closes the book triumphantly; the* First Doctor *drags it away from him. The* Fourth Doctor *resumes.*) Well, medicines have failed to cure. Shall we go on with your *p*tisanes, your hellebores, euphorbias and juice of asafœtida, your liquids and your lotions and your spineless fomentations?

First, Second and Third Doctors (*in chorus*). Yes! Yes! Yes!

Fourth Doctor. And I say no, *no*, NO! (*He becomes impassioned, waving his instruments.*) But if the liver is at fault, we'll cauterize it; if 'tis the hypochondrium, we will remove it—cut it out! And if malignant humors reach the brain, open the skull and let them out! operate! *operate!* OPERATE!

First Doctor (*explosively*). Blood-letter!

Second Doctor (*ditto*). Bone-sawyer!

Third Doctor (*ditto*). Brute!

Fourth Doctor (*lunging toward them in turn with his knife*). Operate! *Operate!* OPERATE!

(*The three other* Doctors, *in rapid-fire retort.*)

First Doctor. Assassin!

Second Doctor. Murderer!

Third Doctor. Butcher!

Fourth Doctor. Pill-pushers! Plaster placers! Prescribers of the puerile placebo! Pup-pup-pup . . .

(*He becomes incoherent. They clutch their several properties menacingly, the* First Doctor *raising the book over his head, the* Second *swinging the black bag, the* Third *brandishing a bottle, the* Fourth *waving a knife. The* King *and the two* Lords *run forward, intervening and forcing the angry* Doctors *into their chairs.*)

King (*as soon as some sort of order is restored*). Sirs! Sirs! This conference is called to cure my son. Is there no way that you can come to an agreement or accord—no plan of treatment all can recommend?

First Doctor (*pompously*). Surely, there is an indication every doctor—everyone the least bit worthy to be called a doctor—must agree to. We have the sov-

ereign remedy, the ptisane. (*Exasperation shown by the rest of the* DOCTORS.) It only needs to fix on a régime—the quantity, the dosage, strained or unstrained, the fifth day or the seventh, or the ninth . . . Now, if secretions all are laudable . . .

SECOND DOCTOR (*breaking in*). If proper medication be refused, I will not prostitute my calling by remaining on the case.

THIRD DOCTOR. And I insist on beverages and on fomentations. My conscience as physician will not acquiesce in any other course.

FOURTH DOCTOR. And *I* insist we operate.

FIRST DOCTOR. Ptisane! Ptisane! Ptisane!

SECOND DOCTOR. Euphorbia and hellebore! and I would add hydragyrum and antimonium!

THIRD DOCTOR. Liquids and fomentations! Liquids and fomentations!

FOURTH DOCTOR. An operation! Two operations! Many operations!

FIRST, SECOND and THIRD DOCTORS (*in chorus, to* FOURTH). Blood-thirster! Gory vivisectionist!

FOURTH DOCTOR (*glaring about and making a business of packing his instruments, to* KING). Sir, any further contact here would be a degradation. I leave you to your hydropath, your pill-roller, your—(*Glaring especially at* FIRST DOCTOR.) your ancient hedge-wife of a gruel-maker!

FIRST DOCTOR (*shrilling with rage*). You . . . you call me . . . you, a mere manipulator, carver and slicer, carpenter, mechanic, tinkerer, cutter and mender, snipping and sewing like a common tailor . . . *you* call *me* . . .

SECOND DOCTOR (*interrupting*). And why not, pray? Could any sane man think your slimy, vapid, impotent *p*tisane . . .

THIRD DOCTOR (*interrupting*). Surely, so far as the ptisane is liquid . . .

SECOND DOCTOR (*cutting him off, furiously*). Be still, you imbecile!

THIRD DOCTOR (*still more furiously*). *Imbecile!* Now, by all the gods of medicine!

(*Poising his black bag for a blow.*)

SECOND DOCTOR (*lifting a menacing bottle*). Imbecile, ignorant, illiterate, idiotic and insane! (*With a sweeping gesture around the group.*) All of you!

FIRST DOCTOR (*tottering forward with his book upraised; to* SECOND DOCTOR). And you, you travesty of a physician—you trafficker in ignorance—you fosterer of colics and of flatulences—you . . . you . . . (*The* KING *jumps up and starts toward the* DOCTORS; *the two* LORDS, *anticipating him slightly, herd the* SECOND, THIRD *and* FOURTH DOCTORS *off the stage, the* KING *rather more gently urging off the* FIRST, *who continues to splutter. As he totters off.*) You! . . . that . . . those . . . those ill-trained, young self-styled progressives! Ill-read, undisciplined young modernists! Those neo-spectrist school practitioners! Those super-post-impulsivist experimenters! Those . . . oh, *oh,* OH! [*Exit.*

(*The* KING *turns back slowly, with an air of deep discouragement, pacing to and fro before taking his seat. The two* LORDS OF CEREMONIES, *reëntering, stop near the entrance and watch him. As they stand thus, the sound of the* QUACK'S *drum is heard, not far off. Both* LORDS *start at the sound, then turn and look at one another. The* SECOND, *jerking one hand slightly in the direction of the*

sound, gestures as slightly toward the KING *with the other hand, and looks inquiringly at the* FIRST. *The latter, after looking at the* KING, *nods almost imperceptibly.*)

FIRST LORD (*aside to* SECOND). Get him, and wait here at the door. (*Exit* SECOND LORD. *The* FIRST *approaches the* KING, *who dejectedly seats himself.*) Your Majesty . . .

KING (*dully*). Yes . . . yes . . . well?

FIRST LORD. The doctors, Sire . . . the consultation has not cleared the road . . .

KING (*angrily*). I have a mighty mind to hang them all!

FIRST LORD (*hesitantly*). Exactly, Sire! . . . but still, that would not cure the prince. Now, Sire . . .

KING (*with irritation*). Well, well, what is it? Are you setting up in practise, too? Have you a fifth discordant treatment to propose?

FIRST LORD. The gods of medicine forbid, Sire! No; but, Sire . . . your Majesty . . . there is another so-called doctor, Sire—I mean, another man who is called doctor—a rank irregular, 'tis true, but he has cured folk where others failed, and if your Majesty . . .

KING (*suddenly sitting up*). Find him and call him in.

FIRST LORD. The others, Sire—those doctors who were here—they will be outraged. They will protest.

KING. Not long. I am a specialist in curing *that* sort of complaint. (*He strikes the back of his neck slightly with the edge of his hand.*) I'll show that fellow—that Fourth Doctor—and the rest of them—a

simple operation that was never known to fail. Go, get your man.

First Lord. I heard—that is, I saw him passing not long since, your Majesty, and had him stopped. He's just at hand. (*Starts across the stage and calls.*) My Lord! The healer—bid him enter.

(*Enter the* Second Lord, *escorting the* Quack. *The two* Lords *fall back, while the* Quack, *betraying some anxiety by quick suspicious glances right and left, but assuming an air of bravado, advances and makes obeisance, touching his forehead, his heart, and salaaming. He is swarthy, black-bearded, with long black hair falling to his shoulders from under a brilliant turban or headband. He wears a rough brown robe, scarcely reaching to the knees, one shoulder and arm being bare. His legs also are bare, his feet shod with sandals or bright red slippers. He wears large brass ear-rings, and carries, or has dangling from his waist, a shallow drum or tom-tom. All his gestures are strange and mysterious. The* King *looks at him fixedly for some seconds, the* Quack *returning the gaze a little defiantly.*)

King. Humph! At least, here's something different. (*After a pause.*) They tell me you can cure diseases.

Quack. I, and those who surround me (*He makes a curious sweeping gesture in the air.*) have done so; yes, your Majesty.

King. You know my son is ill?

Quack. So I have heard, your Majesty.

King. And can you cure him?

(*The* Quack, *without answering immediately, raises the palm of his left hand horizontally in front of*

his face, breathes across it as if it were a mirror, and appears to scrutinize it attentively. Then he looks up quickly at the KING.)

QUACK. Pardon—the royal hand. (*The* KING *holds out the right.*) No, no! the other, please your Majesty! (*The* KING *gives him the left hand, which the* QUACK *examines intently but swiftly. He drops it and stands erect again.*) Yes; I can cure him, Sire.

KING. What warrant have I?

QUACK (*haughtily*). My word, your Majesty.

KING. Humph! actions are better. (*After a pause, in which he appears to be thinking.*) First, you shall cure me five of the worst cases can be found within the kingdom. Then, if you heal them, you shall treat the prince. If you succeed, royal preferment to your heart's desire. If not, your head. Well?

QUACK. As for my head, your Majesty could take it any moment. (*He makes a gesture of lifting his head from his shoulders with both hands and presenting it to the* KING.) So that is that. As to the cures . . . (*He goes through the motions, five times repeated, of shaking invisible coins, or invisible dice, in his right hand, throwing them into the air, and catching them in his left hand, each time looking sharply into that hand as if to see what is there. He resumes.*) Four of the five, your Majesty. That is their bidding.

KING. "Their" bidding? Who are "they"?

QUACK (*with the gesture he used before*). They who surround me. And as they work in secret, I must treat those invalids alone.

KING. H'mmmmm! (*He beckons to the two* LORDS *and they hold a whispered conversation; then the two* LORDS *retire again to a short distance and the* KING *resumes.*) So be it, then. My Lords of Ceremonies will

take charge of you, procure the subjects and arrange the hour. The audience is ended.

(*The* KING *rises and moves across the stage, followed by the two* LORDS *with the* QUACK *between them. Exeunt omnes.*)

CURTAIN

END OF SCENE 1

SCENE 2

The curtain, which has been lowered to indicate the passing of some hours, remains down long enough only to reset the stage. The setting is the same as in SCENE 1 *except that the chairs have been removed and replaced by five cots or litters, on which the five invalids are lying. At the side farthest from the entrance is a screen, behind which the* PRINCE *is sitting, concealed from those on the stage but visible to the audience. He has an air and expression of extreme dejection, and his breast and shoulders occasionally heave with profound although inaudible sighs.*

(*Discovered: The* QUACK, *and the* PRINCE *and the* FIVE INVALIDS *as above. The* QUACK *is moving from cot to cot, silently examining or scrutinizing the patients. The* PRINCE *now and then looks through a peep-hole in the screen, at first with weary boredom, then with increasing attention. At the very beginning of the scene, however, while the* PRINCE *is sunk in his own gloomy thoughts, he unconsciously stretches out one foot and the* QUACK *obviously discovers it and gives a quick, slight nod*

of satisfaction—the situation being that the QUACK *knows the* PRINCE *is there while the* PRINCE *thinks he is undiscovered. The* QUACK *continues his examination, lifting an eyelid, touching a forehead, raising and scrutinizing a hand, putting his hand over a heart, pulling down a lip to look at the teeth, etc. As he does so, he makes various passes and cryptic movements—over one patient, extending both arms, hands extended and palms down, waving them from head to feet; over another, reaching high in the air with one hand as if seizing something invisible which he sifts down as his hand sinks; over another, writing with one finger in the air; over a fourth, snapping both hands with fingers loosely spread as if scattering an invisible liquid; over the fifth, holding a glass globe [which he draws from a pocket or pouch] revolving it slowly and gazing into it closely. The patient over whom he is working always cowers, while the others lift themselves in various attitudes of curious observation. The* PRINCE'S *attention is more and more enlisted; his expression of despair gives way to excitement and amusement. The* QUACK *withdraws a step or two, looks up with arms raised, the hands beckoning inward as if collecting unseen forces; then, with one arm still uplifted, and the other hand a little behind his ear, he appears to listen, all the patients watching him, fascinated. He nods swiftly, folds his arms, and stands with chin down, staring at the cots from under his lowered brows, his eyes ranging from one end of the line to the other.)*

QUACK. So. I shall cure four of you. As to the fifth—it shall be as They will—They who surround me.

(*With a gesture aloft and around.*) And this will be the way of it: the magic signs I have already made will soon show which of you cannot be cured. Him I shall kill; and of his heart, dried, burned and powdered in a mortar, I will make a sovereign potion which will heal all the others. (*His eyes, swinging from side to side, rapidly concentrate on the cot of the* First Invalid. *He slowly raises his hand, pointing to the man.*) You—you—the black sign seems to linger . . .

(*Very gradually, he leans forward, at the same time with equal slowness drawing a long knife from his girdle.*)

First Invalid (*struggling up*). No! No! I can be cured! Where, where? It does not—there is no black sign! I can be cured! I can be cured!

Quack. But those who said you had but two days more to live?

First Invalid. They lied! They lied! I am not ill! Those other men are all more sick than I! I am not sick! I am not sick at all!

Quack. You are not? Then get up! (*He reaches out with the knife.*) But if you can't get up—out comes your heart!

First Invalid (*leaping to his feet and darting behind his cot*). Get up? Get up? Of course I can get up! Don't you see I am up? There is nothing wrong with me!

Quack (*lowering the knife*). Well, we shall see. I will not cut your heart out, *now*, on one condition: that you go and tell the king you're cured; but if you don't stay cured . . .

First Invalid (*scrambling off*). Oh, yes, yes, yes! Of course I'm cured! I'll tell the king—where is he?

Lead me to him quickly! (*Shouting.*) Your Majesty! I'm cured! I'm cured!

(*Exit* First Invalid, *hastily. The* Prince *laughs to himself, silently, chuckling and slapping his knee.*)

Quack (*after sweeping his extended arm, still holding the knife, along the line of cots from end to end and back again, pointing at last to the* Second Invalid). Then, *you!*

Second Invalid (*getting out of bed*). Not me! Not me! I never was as sick as he was, and now I'm better—ever so much better!

Quack (*making a step forward*). "Better" won't do; but if you're *well*—go tell the king!

Second Invalid (*darting off and shouting*). I'm well, sire—oh, where is the king? I'm well, your Majesty! I'm well! [*Exit* Second Invalid.

(*The* Prince *rocks from side to side, laughing and softly clapping his hands in delight. The* Quack *evidently hears him but does not betray himself except by slight signs perceptible to the audience.*)

Quack (*turning toward* Third *and* Fourth Invalids *and whetting the knife on the palm of his hand*). It seems, then, I must choose between you two.

Third and Fourth Invalids (*as they leap out of bed and rush off together, speaking in confused chorus*). No! No! No! I'm cured! I'll tell the king! I'll go straight off and tell the king!

(*The* Prince *doubles up with laughter, stuffing his handkerchief into his mouth. The* Quack *approaches the* Fifth Invalid, *and stands looking at*

him with folded arms. The FIFTH INVALID *returns his gaze defiantly.*)

FIFTH INVALID. Well—now what? Cut out my heart to cure me?

QUACK (*calmly*). What would you suggest?

FIFTH INVALID (*craftily*). What do *I* suggest? Why, I suggest you make it worth my while to keep your secret.

QUACK (*slowly, harshly*). So! Blackmail, eh? Well, friend, I *have* a little secret. Let me tell you what it is. (*Suddenly bending down and thrusting an outstretched forefinger almost in the* FIFTH INVALID'S *face.*) *You are insane.* This doctor (*Tapping his own breast.*) with four wondrous recent cures—cures that are miracles—established to his credit, pronounces *you* insane and not worth curing. Now, go and babble! (*He turns away contemptuously and strikes three resounding blows on his tom-tom. Enter the two* LORDS OF CEREMONIES. *The* QUACK *resumes.*) My lords, the four cures that the king required are made. This fifth poor fellow here's a lunatic. Take him away. But if he starts to raving, silence him. You understand? And pray you, tell his Majesty I await his pleasure, as his most obedient servant.

(*Exeunt the two* LORDS, *carrying the* FIFTH INVALID *on his cot. As the* QUACK *looks after them, the* PRINCE *emerges. The* QUACK, *turning, discovers him and makes an obeisance.*)

PRINCE (*laughing*). You did not know that I was looking on?

QUACK (*grinning*). Pardon, your Highness,—but I did.

PRINCE. You *did!* You . . . Oh, ho ho ho! oh, ha ha ha!

(*He grasps the* QUACK's *hand, slaps him on the back, hugs him in his arms and goes off into roars of laughter in which the* QUACK *joins. The* KING, *entering with the* LORDS OF CEREMONIES, *stops, looks at the pair for an instant, then swiftly at the two* LORDS, *then rushes over and seizes the* PRINCE, *who releases the* QUACK *and embraces his father.*)

KING. Cured! cured! cured!

PRINCE (*releasing the* KING *and wiping his eyes, still unable to stop laughing*). Father, this fellow is the boldest rogue, the damnedest rascal and the cleverest man I ever saw! Oh, ha ha ha! I never can be serious again! Father, I want him. I have got to have him near me!

KING (*shaking a finger at the* QUACK *in poorly simulated disapproval, but ending in laughter*). You . . . oh, well, after all, kings need men about them who can do things! (*To* FIRST LORD OF CEREMONIES.) Go, get a fitting garment for the prince's chancellor. (FIRST LORD *makes a quick exit.* KING *resumes to* QUACK.) We'll have to watch you, but . . .

PRINCE (*breaking in*). Father, if you could just have seen them . . . oh, ho ho ho! oh, ha ha ha!

(*He goes off in another gale of laughter in which all join.*)

KING (*speaking as well as he can through his laughter*). I did—I did! I never saw four invalids so frantically sure that they were cured! But as to you—that's what I care about!

PRINCE. I tell you, I can never be that solemn ass

again—not with this fellow 'round. Here—(*To* First Lord, *who has reëntered with a gorgeous robe.*) put that on him!

(*The* First Lord *places the robe on the* Quack's *shoulders. The* Prince *takes his arm. As he is doing so, the* Four Doctors *file in and form a watching group near the entrance.*)

King. And now, Sir Quack . . .

The Four Doctors (*in chorus, drowning the* King's *speech*). Quack, quack, quack, quack! Quack, quack, quack, quack!

(*The* Quack, *glancing at them, smiling sarcastically, significantly flaunts the skirt of his splendid robe in their direction, still more significantly indicates the* Prince *on his arm, draws the* Prince's *hand a little closer, and prepares to walk off, his head close to the* Prince's *in confidential talk. The* Four Doctors, *silenced, look blankly at him and at one another.*)

CURTAIN

THE WHEEL TURNS

Based on a Basque ballad entitled "Benito Zubiri," in an anonymous collection published under the name "Le Romancero du Pays Basque," Firmin Didot Frères, Paris, 1859. The action takes place in the Spanish Basque country, near the French frontier, about the beginning of the nineteenth century.

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

BENITO ZUBIRI, *a brigand.*
ADAM, *one of his lieutenants.*
VASQUEZ, SEVILLA, BATISTA, MARTIN, MANUEL, *guards.*
A COURIER.
A SINGER.
MEMBERS OF ZUBIRI'S BAND.

ACT I

The interior of a prison. A large cell with a partly grated door at one side and a barred window at the back, through which the outer light shows grayly at the beginning of the act, soon fading into blackness. The stage is nearly dark. A lantern on a table near the front shines on the faces of the group about it, but behind them the surroundings are merely suggested.

(*Discovered:* VASQUEZ, SEVILLA, BATISTA, MARTIN *and* MANUEL, *playing cards at the table;* BENITO ZUBIRI, *a vague figure moving about in the background; as he does so, an occasional clank or rattle of his fetters is heard. He approaches the window and takes hold of the bars, his head and shoulders silhouetted against the grayish square. Then he crosses to the door and drums on it aimlessly.*)

VASQUEZ (*looking over his shoulder at the prisoner*). 'Tis a strong prison, Benito Zubiri. 'Tis a strong prison of stone and iron. When you go forth from it, my friend, a soul will be about to quit its prison of flesh and bone. Eh—what, Benito?

(BENITO *begins to strum a livelier measure, whistling gaily.*)

SEVILLA. Well, well! What now, my bullfinch? What makes our good Benito's heart so gay? Is that the way a fellow feels when he's as good as dead?

(BENITO *drums and whistles a devil-may-care roulade.*)

VASQUEZ. In three days more, dear man, you'll twist your lips into another shape. No bullfinch whistle coming through them then, you know. 'Twill be the death gasp rattling in your throat. Is that the thought that seems so merry now?

BENITO (*coming nearer to the circle of light about the group*). My lords, if it amuses you to know, why, then I'll tell you. I am more glad to die than tongue can say in words—and so, it whistles!

SEVILLA. Well—each one to his tastes, of course; but that's an odd one!

BENITO. Odd? Not so odd, when you come down to it. Just love of change; a passion for variety. I'm weary of a daily grind of crimes. The bandit's trade has grown monotonous, and I am sick of it.

VASQUEZ. God! That's a sickness the garrote will cure! (*They laugh.*)

BATISTA. Yes—the garrote will cure it, surely.

MARTIN. It's cured a many of your kind, Benito.

MANUEL. A many, too, that weren't so happy to be cured! (*All laugh again.*)

BENITO. No? Were they not? Why should they be displeased? It's quite the thing for those in my world to go out of it that way. Yes, Martin, it should be a cure. I shall stick my tongue out when the time comes—that I shall, surely; but I'll bite no one, surely—least of all bite you, my lords.

VASQUEZ. No. The garrote will do all the biting that is done. (*They laugh.*)

BENITO. It ought to cure my goitre—don't you think so? And ever since my parents gave it me, I have been trying vainly to get rid of it, till now.

SEVILLA. Sure the garrote will cure your goitre! You'll never make complaint of it again! (*They laugh.*)

BENITO. No. And I'll hear no further talk of bandits being outcasts who ought to be forbid the mass, or made to steal their way in to it by the lepers' door. You'll see me striding into Paradise by the great portals, if ever any of you get a sight of Paradise at all.

BATISTA. Really, Benito, is there nothing you regret at all in all this world you're leaving?

BENITO (*seating himself between two of the guards at the table*). Nothing, my lords, except the pleasure of your company, and the means of making you some slight token of remembrance.

(*Something seems suddenly to enter his mind. He looks off abstractedly, apparently checking off items on his fingers, the guards watching him curiously.*)

VASQUEZ. What are you thinking of, Benito Zubiri, counting that way on your fingers?

BENITO (*as if suddenly recalled*). I? Oh—nothing! Nothing, that is, that matters now.

VASQUEZ. Well, if it's nothing now, what was it when it was something?

BENITO (*with seeming indecision*). Why—hidden gold . . . and . . . (*Starting off on another tack as the guards prick up their ears at the mention of gold, forgetting their cards and moving closer, hanging on his words with rapt attention.*) How queerly things work out! Now, take that buried treasure; a month ago it meant a lace mantilla for my girl—one such as your Maria wants, Vasquez—or else a golden necklace such as Sevilla's Margarita loves. A month ago? Why, you might say it means such things today, for it's still buried in the same place. But then—someone slips a cap on poor Benito, and someone puts an iron collar round his neck—they turn a screw—and what about it then? Here's my girl, and here's Maria, Margarita's here, longing, all three of them, for lace and jewelry—and there's the gold to purchase it; but *there* the gold might just as well not be, for no one knows where "there" is. Now, if that iron ring that stops Benito's breath and breaks his neck dissolved the gold, as you might say, to nothing—blotted it away—all might be satisfied. They'd say, perhaps, "good riddance; it was worth the price." But when the gold's still there, useless, since none can find it, and each one thinking what the gold would buy—then the garrote

that gives Benito rest wakens unrest for many other folk.

VASQUEZ. Is that what you were counting on your fingers—gold?

BENITO. Yes; hiding places I had made in Spain for money that's without an owner now.

(*The guards ply him with questions so rapidly that they speak almost at once.*)

VASQUEZ. Where is that money now, Benito?

SEVILLA. Is there much of it?

BATISTA. How many caches have you?

MANUEL. Is it far from here?

MARTIN. Are you sure it's there?

VASQUEZ (*motioning the others to keep quiet*). Tell us where it is!

BENITO. The *biggest* cache is . . . let me see . . . the biggest cache—(*He pauses tantalizingly, while the excitement of the guards rises.*) the biggest cache would be at Ecija, in Andalusia; eighty-three ounces in an iron pot.

SEVILLA. Ounces of gold, Benito?

BENITO. Surely! (*He glances slyly right and left as the guards break into a confused chatter in which all speak at once. The words "Ecija," "Andalusia," and "eighty-three ounces" are distinguishable. The chatter stops suddenly as he resumes, raising his voice.*) And there's another good one at Segovia—a box with all the silverware of Count—but never mind what Count—and gold and silver medals once collected by a Canon, which I collected afterwards from him. (*Musingly.*) They could be melted down . . .

(VASQUEZ *and* SEVILLA *confer together inaudibly. The others ply* BENITO *with rapid questions.*)

MANUEL. Is that all, Benito? Is that all there is?

MARTIN. The places you have named are all so far away. How could we get to them?

BATISTA. How could we find the treasure, granted we were there?

(VASQUEZ *and* SEVILLA *turn sharply to hear the answer to the last question.*)

BENITO. Oh, as to that, nothing is easier. I left marks a child could not mistake.

SEVILLA. Look here, Benito—how are we going to get to your Ecija?

VASQUEZ. The devil alone could carry us so far, and he'll be too much occupied with you!

BATISTA (*interposing nervously*). What are those marks, Benito?

BENITO (*addressing* VASQUEZ). Would you like to know them?

VASQUEZ (*impatiently, to* BATISTA). Shut up, you fool, and wait a minute, will you? The marks will still be there! (*To* BENITO.) Have you no cache of treasure in these provinces that we could get to quickly and without too much fatigue?

BENITO. Yes . . . let me see. (*A stir of fresh interest among the guards.*) It's . . . (*He again glances at them slyly as he seems to be thinking.*) Wait, though . . . No! (*Movements and exclamations of disappointment among the guards.*) No. It is foreign money, and besides, it does not belong to me alone. It would not be delicate!

VASQUEZ. Stuff and nonsense! Come on and out with it!

(*The others fire their questions almost simultaneously.*)

SEVILLA. Where is this cache?

MANUEL. How much is there?

MARTIN. How can we find it?

BATISTA. Is it in English sovereigns, or French Napoleons?

BENITO. Wait a minute—wait a minute, now, and don't all speak to me at once! There's—let me see . . . (*Appears to count on his fingers.*) a hundred—hundred and ten—no, hundred and eleven sovereigns of gold (oh, such beautiful gold!) and thirty—thirty-four . . . yes, thirty-four Napoleons minted in France.

(VASQUEZ *and* SEVILLA *whisper as before, while the others shout their questions.*)

MANUEL. Where? Where? Where?

MARTIN. At what place, Benito, at what place?

BATISTA. How is it marked, Benito—how can we find it?

VASQUEZ (*silencing the others*). How far is it? Would we have to dig very deep?

BENITO. A mere nothing, my lord; yes, as to that, a mere nothing. But first of all, let me commend the coffer to your care. 'Tis promised to my little dear. And if the key is lost, don't break the lock. I'll show you how to open it. The box is made of carved wood of the lemon tree, banded with copper, and there are two bolts which shoot into the wood . . .

VASQUEZ (*breaking in with angry impatience*). There will not be so many in your casket, let me tell you, cutthroat that you are! Tell us at once where this box is, and don't deceive us, either!

BENITO (*with injured innocence*). Deceive you, my lords? But why? I am going to die, as you have told me, and I have not forgotten it.

ALL THE GUARDS. The box! the box! the box!

VASQUEZ. If you delay much longer, the chaplain will be here!

BATISTA (*ingratiatingly*). He will make you sing the offices and give you naught but holy water, while with us you will have a swallow of good wine.

BENITO (*sanctimoniously*). I would rather that the holy man should keep the wine, and drink it at the mass for the salvation of my soul, which is so joyous at the thought of joining its Creator!

(VASQUEZ *makes a threatening gesture but* SEVILLA *interposes.*)

SEVILLA. But will you tell us where the box is, and how to find it? You know you cannot take it with you to the other world, and no one can get at you there.

BENITO (*dropping his voice mysteriously, and speaking rather glibly*). What you say is true; so listen to my secret. (*The guards crowd around in eager excitement.*) Now—you all know Pampeluna, and the place down at the far end of the Taconera?

GUARDS (*all together*). Yes! Yes! Of course! Well? What then, Benito?

BENITO (*same manner*). Look on the far side, then, of the Taconera, and you will see an old house with a blue door. Don't be misled, though, by the large one—also with blue doors—that stands in line with the cathedral tower, straight before you; that is not the one I mean. It is the small one, farther toward this way. Just to the right, a little to the right, perhaps ten yards or twenty to the left—I mean the right; yes—I should say the right—there is an arch. Go through this arch . . .

VASQUEZ. Wait—wait a minute there—Benito! Se-

villa, you hold on to this a while. Batista, you get ready to come next. Well, now go on.

BENITO (*resuming*). Go through this arch . . . wait; let me think. . . . It might be easier to cross the court behind the wineshop further down the square —some thirty yards or forty further down and on the other side—go up three steps, and . . . No; that's not so good. You'd surely get into a tangle there. Come back again. Go through the arch, then—the one that's to the left of the green door . . . .

SEVILLA. Hold on—hold on! You said before it was to the right of a blue door.

BENITO. So I did; that's right. We're coming from the other side now, aren't we? I had forgot we're coming that way and not this. There is a green door there, you see, the right side from the arch, which makes the arch the left side from the door . . .

VASQUEZ (*violently but incoherently*). Ahhh!

BENITO (*hastily*). Well—never mind. Go through this arch and take the alley of San Augustin—it's on the right—and follow it as far as to the place Santa Cecilia. Just there the streets of la Curia and Navarreria come in.

SEVILLA. Batista! You take hold. I am chock full.

BENITO (*resuming*) . . . the streets of la Curia and Navarreria come in. (*To* BATISTA.) You have that? Have you got the names? Good. La Curia and Navarreria. Don't forget. Well, then, don't enter either of those streets. Slant just a little to the left, as if you might be going to the market. Wait . . . yes—you may even pass through the market, except that in that case you must not take the right. Then . . .

BATISTA. Hold on, hold on, Benito. You go too fast for me. Did you say to take the right, or left?

MANUEL. He said the right.

MARTIN. No! He said the left!

MANUEL. I know he said the right. Didn't you say the right, Benito?

BENITO. Before you reach the market, do you mean, or after? If it's before, why, then you take the right, and if you choose to cross the market, then you take the left; or rather—no! I mean the other way!

VASQUEZ (*sharply*). Look here, Benito Zubiri—are you making game of us? The devil himself would lose his road to hell with such directions. How are we going to find the way through Pampeluna? Tell us the spot; we'll find out how to get there.

BENITO. That's true, my lords—that's true. Let's see if I can think of one that's easier. The other came the first into my mind because it goes under the window of a comely wench. H'mmmm . . . Yes. Follow the street, then of la Chapitela. Next, when you reach the place of Santa Cecilia, go straight on until you see a sort of cabaret. There is a woman there, old Carmen, who'll willingly go with you to the spot and show you where the treasure's hid, providing only you give her her share.

SEVILLA. No, no! No further splitting up! We're five already. If we have to make the shares proportionate to rank . . .

VASQUEZ (*breaking in, importantly*). And you can stake your soul we'll share according to our rank!

SEVILLA (*sullenly*). Well—that's just what I was saying, wasn't it? Then there'll be little enough for four of us.

VASQUEZ (*angrily*). What are you grumbling at? If mine's the largest share, I give up most to Carmen, don't I? And if yours is so small, why bellow like a calf that's got the bellyache about the pittance that

comes off it for the crone? Look here, Benito—how much will she want? A sixth?

BENITO. How can I tell? A sixth? Perhaps if she has merely drunk enough to be good-humored, that might content her. But if she has drunk more or less than that—why then, who knows? A third, perhaps. Perhaps she might ask half, seeing she knows you could get none at all without her help.

(*An angry grumble among the guards.*)

VASQUEZ (*turning to them sharply*). What's that? Who's speaking now?

MARTIN. I say, who knows if she would be content with half?

BATISTA. I say, who knows what other tricks she'd play?

MANUEL. I say, to hell with the old hag!

SEVILLA. Listen to me, Vasquez. Batista's right. She might speak fair, and go along with us, but plan to have somebody knife us afterwards, when we'd done all the work.

VASQUEZ. Well—won't we have to take the chance? There's no one else who knows.

SEVILLA. Benito knows. Let's do better, if we do the thing at all. Let's take Benito.

VASQUEZ (*startled at first, but quickly yielding*). Benito! H'mmmm . . . How is that, Benito? Would you like to go along? And would you promise not to try to run away?

BATISTA. You'd lose our friendship if you did, Benito.

VASQUEZ. You'd lose a vast deal more than that, Benito boy. You'd go a damaged carcase to the hangman!

BENITO (*with injured innocence*). Don't speak to me like that, my lords! And if you think I'd do a thing like that, go on and leave me to my thoughts of heaven. That is the only thing concerns me now.

(VASQUEZ *motions to* SEVILLA *and they move a little away from the others and confer inaudibly.* BENITO *fingers the cards with feigned indifference, but shows that he is listening acutely to catch what* VASQUEZ *and* SEVILLA *are saying. The other guards whisper among themselves. Presently* VASQUEZ *and* SEVILLA *return and the former speaks cautiously to the group.*)

VASQUEZ. Listen, all of you. The night is very dark. Sevilla, here, will slip out presently, unseen, gather long cloaks and black sombreros for us all, and wait outside. Then, when the sentinels have passed on their next round, we four will follow, keeping Benito midmost of the group. If any watcher meets us, seeing dimly there are five, he'll think it is the guard. Once outside the gate—what then, Benito? Which way do we go?

BENITO (*glibly*). Pass by the Taconera, take the Plaza Castillo to the street of Chapitela, leaving the fount of Santa Cecilia on the right; enter the street of Carmen, pass out of the city through the gate of France. Once outside the gate, go by the straight road out across the plain until I signal Vasquez and whisper "here's the place."

VASQUEZ. Good. That's more like it. Well, Sevilla?

(*He jerks his thumb toward the door.* SEVILLA *opens the door and passes out. He returns almost at once and beckons to the other* GUARDS.)

SEVILLA. Come out here just a moment, all of you. There's something else.

(*All the guards go out, the last one closing the door after him.*)

BENITO (*cautiously but exultantly*). 'Tis a strong prison, Benito Zubiri. 'Tis a strong prison of stone and iron! When you go forth from it, he said, a soul will be about to quit its prison of flesh and bone. Maybe, Vasquez—maybe. But not Benito's soul!

CURTAIN

END OF ACT I

ACT II

A few hours later.

A desolate plain lighted by a low moon which is three or four days on the wane. A road comes in from the R., *down stage, and disappears up stage,* L., *behind low growth such as would be made by gorse, heath, rosemary and scrub-oak. In the distance a range of mountains lifts against the sky, with a prominent peak near* C. *and two or three notches among the smaller summits to* R. *of it.*

(*Discovered: Empty stage. Presently the tramp of several men approaching is heard, and with it the rattle of* BENITO'S *chains. Enter* VASQUEZ *and* SEVILLA, *with* BENITO *lagging back between them, followed by* BATISTA, MANUEL *and* MARTIN.)

BENITO (*in a tone of distress*). Slow—slow! Go slow, Vasquez! Wait a minute!

(*He slips down to the ground.*)

VASQUEZ. That's all you've said the whole way out—"slow," "slow," "wait a minute"! We haven't got a week to do our work in, whelp of a Benito!

BENITO. I told you, though, we need the moon to light the job. There was no use in hurrying until the moon came up.

VASQUEZ. And I told you we've lanterns underneath our cloaks for all the light we need. And now you have the moon, and still you keep on bleating to go slow!

BENITO. Look here, Vasquez, who knows the most about this cache and how to find it—you, or I? God! man—put on these irons for a while and walk a mile or two! You'll bleat more piteously than I do, let me tell you!

VASQUEZ. Well, now you've had your rest. Come on!

BATISTA. Say, Vasquez—how about that moon when we get back? We had the dark to help us coming out, but now we'll have the moon.

VASQUEZ. We'll have the sun, unless Benito hits a faster pace! Here—get hold of his irons, two of you, and start him on his way!

BENITO. Wait—wait! Don't yawp about the moon! You'll have such golden blinders in your hands when you get back that no one meeting you could see the sun at noonday, if you want to shut his eyes!

VASQUEZ. Oh, will we! Well, let me tell you we have uses of our own for all those golden blinders! Come—get a hold of him. Batista, put your knife point in his back and keep the pace I set. *He'll* keep it then, I warrant!

BENITO (*struggling with the guards as he is lifted to his feet*). Wait, wait, I say! And let me get the sweat out of my eyes! We're nearly there. I want to get my bearings. We mustn't overrun it. Here—give me

room to see. Stand back there, all of you. I want to get my bearings. You needn't fear I'll run away! (*He moves his legs and arms with exaggerated effort and stiffness and with grunts of distress as they slowly withdraw a pace or two, leaving him free. Then he looks about, calculatingly, pointing his finger at the mountain range as if telling off the peaks. Resuming.*) There's the Devil's Hump, and there's the peak of San Sebastian; then the second notch—the dead pine ought to be in line with it. I wish the moon were just a little higher . . . but . . . Ha! I see it glinting on the dead pine now! Look, Vasquez! Look, Sevilla! (*Pointing excitedly.*) Don't you see that white gleam, like a skeleton, in line there with the notch, almost? A trifle to the right? By God! We'd almost overrun the mark! And how would we have seen it with those damned smoky lanterns—hey? Now do you see the need of waiting for the moon? (*Working up his excitement.*) Look, men, for a black stone on the right, and close beside the road (*They search feverishly.*) . . . a black stone, rather long, with a high point on one end . . .

Batista, Manuel and Vasquez (*from different spots, but almost simultaneously*). Here! Here is one!

Benito. Not that one, Manuel—not that one, Batista—yes, Vasquez, yes! the one by you! (*The several members of the guard crowd around with confused cries of "What, this one?" "Where?" "Which one?" "Is this the cache?" while* Vasquez *shouts repeatedly "Bring the pick!"* Benito, *silencing them at length by louder shouting.*) No! No! No! No! Not yet! (*As they are silenced.*) That stone there is the starting point. It's not the cache itself. It's just a marker. Here—Vasquez! Do you see the peak of San Sebastian? You know which it is—that one there. (*Point-*

ing.) Well, now, the second notch there at the left—see it? Well, stand in line between that notch there and the stone. Carefully! Have you got it? Now take ten paces west along the road. Count them carefully.

VASQUEZ (*walking toward* L. *stage*). One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten.

(NOTE. *The distance should be just sufficient to take* VASQUEZ *out of sight of the audience, the number of paces in* BENITO'S *instruction being made to accord with this requirement.*)

BENITO. Halt! Sharp, now, right face! Make it a quarter turn, no more, no less. Well—have you right-faced?

VASQUEZ (*from just off stage*). Yes.

BENITO. Now take five paces, straight ahead.

VASQUEZ. One, two, three . . . Hell! It's right among the gorse and thorn bushes! Ouch! What devil-damned place . . . Ouch!

BENITO. Of course it's in the gorse and thorn bushes! Where would you make a cache? Right in the nice smooth center of the Prefect's lawn? I covered it with boulders and put the gorse and thorn trees back so no damned fool would stumble on it easily. You should have seen the blood on me when I got through! Get out your knives and cut the thorns away.

VASQUEZ. Here—come on up here, all of you, and bring that pig Benito. Keep a close eye on him. (*They crowd up close to the side of the stage from which* VASQUEZ *is calling, pushing* BENITO *in front of them.*) Come in here, you spawn of the devil, and tell me if this is the spot!

BENITO (*just off stage*). You see I can't get in there, Vasquez, with these irons on my legs!

VASQUEZ. Then pick him up there, two of you! Batista—Manuel—pick him up and bring him here!

(*There is a scuffle just at the edge of the stage, moving off.*)

BATISTA (*just off stage*). Jesu Maria! Vasquez, we can't get through with him this way. Let him look from here.

BENITO (*as before*). Surely I can see from here! Vasquez is standing on the very spot.

VASQUEZ (*as before*). All right, then. Take him out, but keep an eye on him. Batista, you stand over him. Come on, the other three of you; get out your knives and clear away.

BENITO (*reappearing at the side of the stage with* BATISTA). Vasquez—and all of you—I'm nearly gone. Let me lie down a while, until you find the box. You'll need me then to open it. It's much too strong to break with any tools you have, but I can open it if I don't get too faint. Let me lie down. Let me lie down.

VASQUEZ. Hell! Let the pig lie down, but keep an eye on him. And if he makes a move that looks suspicious, bash his head in!

(*A muffled sound of chopping and breaking branches comes from off stage, followed by dull blows of a pick which continue through the ensuing scene.* BENITO, *with* BATISTA *following threateningly, drags and stumbles back along the road to a point* R. *of* C. *stage, where he sits down on the ground with an air of exhaustion.* BATISTA *stands over him. Presently* BENITO *raises his head and looks at* BATISTA.)

BENITO. That Vasquez is a brute to treat me so!

BATISTA. Huh! How do you think he ought to treat a cutthroat? Kiss you, play patty-cake and dance you on his knee?

BENITO. He's worse than just a brute. He is a fool —talking of bashing heads in! Look here, Batista; suppose I made some harmless move you didn't understand, and you did bash my head in, just when you men had got that box of gold you couldn't open without me? Where would you be then? And how would you explain things at the prison and to the Governor tomorrow?

BATISTA. Why . . .

BENITO. And it's not just myself I'm thinking of. He's hurting you men, too.

BATISTA. How is he hurting us?

BENITO. Why, if he had been kinder . . . I'd have told him . . . but what's the use enriching such a brute? I'm sorry you men have to lose it, too— that's all.

BATISTA (*excited*). Told him what, Benito—what would you have told him?

BENITO. Why . . . if he had been kinder, there's another cache, much easier to get, that I could tell him of . . . if he weren't such a brute!

BATISTA (*eagerly*). Another cache? Where? What is it? Tell me, Benito! Tell me!

BENITO. A cache of gold doubloons, just over there. (*Making a vague gesture toward* R. *stage.*) There's just one big flat stone on top of it.

BATISTA (*with great excitement*). Look here, Benito, I've been trying to befriend you all along. You didn't know it, but I've always been your friend. It would have been much harder for you up to now, except for things I've done . . . things, you know . . . I've said to Vasquez when you didn't hear!

BENITO. Is that so? Good old Batista!

BATISTA. Yes. Why, that time he told me to stick my knife point into your back, to make you step along, I didn't do it—did you notice?

BENITO (*rubbing his back and wincing*). Well, you didn't stick it very *deep*, perhaps.

BATISTA. I had to make believe, you know! Benito—where is that cache?

BATISTA. It's—(*Confidentially.*) come closer . . . it's—— (*Suddenly drawing away.*) No! (*With change of tone.*) No! if I tell you, you will tell that brute, Vasquez!

BATISTA (*earnestly*). No, no! Benito, I swear by all the holy saints I'll never tell him. Where is the cache? Tell me, just between ourselves!

BENITO. Why should you tell him, anyway? Why not collect it now, while all the rest are digging, and keep it for your own?

BATISTA. Could we, Benito—could we?

BENITO. Why not? It's not a hundred yards from here. A hundred? Why, it's scarcely fifty. What a joke on Vasquez!

BATISTA. Point it out to me, Benito! Point it out to me!

BENITO (*peering* R.). I couldn't possibly, Batista—not from here; it's just one stone among a thousand stones. I'd find it in the dark, myself, by feeling, but I couldn't show you even from a dozen yards at noon, to say nothing of a hundred in the dark.

BATISTA. Then come with me, quickly!

BENITO. But I can't, Batista, with these irons on my legs. I can't get through that gorse and stuff. You saw just now—you and big Manuel couldn't haul me through . . . Hark! What is that they're shouting?

VASQUEZ (*from off stage*). Batista, is all well? The prisoner is safe?

BATISTA (*shouting back*). All's well, Vasquez, all's well! Trust me! Have you struck anything?

VASQUEZ (*as before*). The ground rings hollow underneath the pick. It can't be far.

(*During the immediately preceding lines, while* BATISTA'S *back is turned,* BENITO *starts up and looks about him sharply, as if planning his "get-away." His movements show an alertness that belies his former pretence of utter exhaustion, but before* BATISTA *turns back he sinks down again in his pose of collapse.*)

BENITO. It can't be far. He's right. It can't be far. It cannot take them long.

BATISTA. But that other cache, Benito—that other cache!

BENITO. If you could get these leg irons off, I'd lead you there in two shakes of a lamb's tail, help you uncover it, and slip back here in two shakes more, and they no whit the wiser.

BATISTA (*doubtfully*). I have a key—but . . .

BENITO (*indifferently*). Just as you like, of course. It makes no odds to me. My wounded legs are both so stiff and sore there's naught I crave so much as just to lie here where I am. But if we do it, it must be at once, or it will be too late.

BATISTA. But can I trust you?

BENITO. Have I tricked you yet? (BATISTA *stoops and removes the leg irons.* BENITO *holds out his hands.*) Better take these off, too, so I can help you lift the stone. It's pretty heavy and will take the two of us to handle it. (BATISTA *takes off the wrist irons.*) Hark! What is that they're saying now?

SEVILLA (*off stage*). Hola, Vasquez, I struck something then—a plank, I think. We're near the end. Dig, Vasquez, dig!

BENITO. The plank! And now they'll find that big bag of doubloons!

BATISTA. Bag of doubloons? I thought it was a coffer?

BENITO. It is a coffer, but on the top of it I dropped a bag of doubloons, too. I had forgotten it till just this minute. Listen, Batista—when they find it, thinking you don't know, do you suppose they're knaves enough to hide it in their cloaks and cheat you of your share?

BATISTA (*explosively*). Sons of the devil! That's just what they'd do! Ho there! Hold on there! Wait!

(*He dashes off,* L. *Before he is half-way across the stage,* BENITO, *rising swiftly, leaps to concealment among the shrubs, etc., up stage, with a wild flourishing gesture of freedom.* BATISTA, *just as he is about to disappear* L., *runs into* VASQUEZ *who is rushing on from that side.*)

VASQUEZ (*yelling*). The thing we struck was rock—the solid rock! We're down to solid rock! There's nothing there. Where is Benito?

BATISTA (*wheeling*). Jesu Maria! He is gone! Quick—down the road! [*He rushes off,* R.

VASQUEZ (*yelling*). Sevilla! Martin! Manuel! Benito's gone! Take after him!

(*He runs off,* R., *followed by all the rest of the guards. After a moment* BENITO *emerges from his hiding and bounds to* C. *stage. He looks toward the side where the guards ran off, then to*

the side where they were digging, then down at the shackles. Suddenly he doubles up with laughter.)

BENITO. Oh, ho ho ho ho! Ha ha ha ha! Oh, ha ha ha ha!

CURTAIN

END OF ACT II

ACT III

Some weeks later.

BENITO'S *stronghold in a mountain pass. A cliff rising at the* R. *and a mass of rocks at the* L. *mask the entrances on both sides. There is an effect of depth and great distance in the background.*

(*Discovered:* BENITO *and members of his band of robbers. One of them is playing a guitar and singing; others are playing cards, cleaning their weapons, sleeping, etc.*)

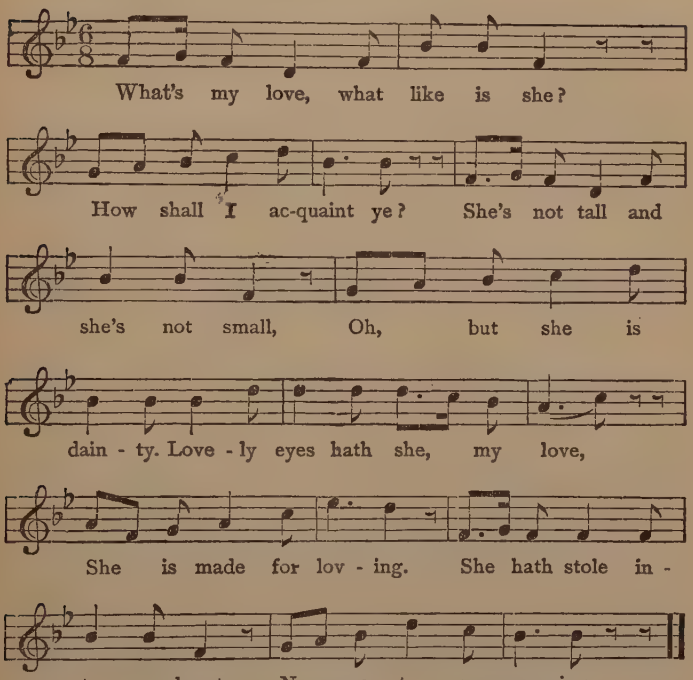
THE SINGER.[1]

What's my love—what like is she? How shall I acquaint ye?
She's not tall, and she's not small. Oh, but she is dainty!
Lovely eyes hath she, my love; she is made for loving
She hath stole into my heart, never to go roving.

[1] This is a free rendering of an old Basque folksong, "Nik Badut Maitegnobat," with the original music of a similar love song.

Song

The Wheel Turns, opening of Act III


What's my love, what like is she?
How shall I ac-quaint ye? She's not tall and
she's not small, Oh, but she is
dain - ty. Love - ly eyes hath she, my love,
She is made for lov - ing. She hath stole in -
to my heart, Nev - er to go rov - ing.

Music very slightly adapted from a Basque lovesong—"Kantore bertsu," "The Pain of Loving." Le Folk Lore du Pays Basque. J. Vinson, Paris, 1883

Give me, lovely rose, I pray, joy instead of sighing.
Should I die of love, my love, would you mourn my dying?
Pain of love—what pain it is! Now I know it clearly.
Were the torment tenfold more, still I'd love you dearly!

Oh, how often I have come! But it was not fruitless;
Since you love me, let them talk. What they say is bootless.
Oh, my dear, what cruel pain every hour apart is!
While my feet are forced to roam, in your heart my heart is!

Count the stars, the million stars, as the moon doth ride them;
In my eyes they all are pale, as you shine beside them.
Keep the love of me, my dear—in your heart enfold me;
Never will I cease to love you till the cold tomb hold me!

(*At a sound from off stage,* L., *all seize their weapons and start to their feet.* BENITO, *quicker than the rest, leaps to that side, looking off. He relaxes and laughs.*)

BENITO. Cover your fangs, my wolves. 'Tis just our comrades of the pack, bringing a drove of lambs—and sorry-looking lambs they are! The devil fly away with me if there's a bite of meat on all of them together! (*Enter* VASQUEZ, SEVILLA, BATISTA, MARTIN *and* MANUEL, *herded by* ADAM *and a couple of other bandits. The prisoners are gaunt, dirty, ragged and unarmed. At a motion and a growl from* ADAM *they huddle near the rocks at the* L.) Well, Adam, well—what now? What bone yard did you rake to find these scarecrows?

ADAM. I know they are no good to us, Benito. I brought them in for fear they might do harm. Shall we . . . ?

(*Jerks his thumb* R., *and makes a significant motion of slightly raising his gun.*)

BENITO (*who has been eyeing the captives sharply*).

Well, by good Saint Barabbas! (*Sarcastically.*) Adam, you shock me! Send our guests away so hastily when they've just come? But then, of course, you didn't know. These gentlemen are dear old friends. Many's the hour we've spent together, eh, Vasquez? Sevilla, too—Martin, and Manuel; we used to be inseparable. And good Batista; he sat up with me at night. What chanced that night, Batista, that you went away so suddenly?

(BATISTA *makes a kind of hopeless gesture.*)

VASQUEZ (*sullenly*). That's what I'd like to know!

BENITO. Damn me if I could understand what you were at! There was I, standing ready to unlock the box whenever you might find it . . . oh, by the way —that makes me think; didn't you find it?

VASQUEZ. To hell with the box!

(SEVILLA *twitches* VASQUEZ's *sleeve and seems to remonstrate with him. The other guards fidget nervously.*)

BENITO. Oh, if you like. It's not a bad idea. To hell with it, by all means. You'll have lots of time to hunt it there. But, as I was saying—there was I, standing ready to unlock the box, when all you men began to roar like fiends, and then you bolted, yelling down the road as if the devil chased you.

VASQUEZ. As if we chased the devil, you mean, Benito!

(*Same business with* SEVILLA *and the others, showing their fear of angering* BENITO *further.*)

BENITO. Well, it looks as if you'd caught him and he'd turned on you. (*Affably.*) But how is everything at the old jail? How's business doing?

(VASQUEZ *makes an angry unintelligible noise and spits on the ground.*)

SEVILLA (*interposing in a conciliatory tone*). The Governor broke us all, Benito.

BENITO. I see; I see. He seems to have made a thorough job of it.

BATISTA. We had to sneak away; we couldn't stand it. Even the children in the streets made sport of us.

VASQUEZ (*furiously*). Shut up, you fool!

BENITO (*laughing*). Vasquez is somewhat touchy, it appears. Don't mind him, good Batista. He is cross because he's tired, perhaps, or hungry. Well—where were you fellows headed for? Segovia, perhaps, or else Ecija, hunting those other buried piles of gold? Eighty-three ounces at Ecija, you remember, all in an iron pot!

(*Laughs delightedly, slapping his knee.* VASQUEZ *curses inaudibly.*)

SEVILLA. Jesu Maria! if I'd one ounce, I'd not be here! I'd be in a bodega that I know of, with a flask of wine, eating black bread and sausage. The devil could have the rest, and me, too, if he'd feed me!

(*Sympathetic murmurs from the other guards, except* VASQUEZ, *who continues to scowl.*)

BENITO. So; tamed now, are you? Ready to talk sense? Ready to learn a trade that fills your belly every day? We have one here that needs some good apprentices. The other question is if you are good ones. What do you say, Vasquez?

VASQUEZ (*surlily*). I say my throat is dryer than hell's dust. Give me a drink! (BENITO *signs to one of the brigands, who passes* VASQUEZ *a wine skin or leather*

bottle. VASQUEZ *drinks greedily from it and passes it to his companions. He wipes his mouth on the back of his hand and continues.*) I say my trade is fighting, and I don't care where nor what, so long as pay is sure.

BENITO. So? That sounds promising; but many things sound promising that turn out disappointing in the end—caches of sovereigns and of Napoleons, for instance. Let's see: what was it that we talked about that night? A hundred and eleven sovereigns and thirty-four Napoleons, I think? Well, you'll find all that, and more, packed in the coffers of a courier who's soon to pass this way. You shall collect them. (*A murmur of protest from some of the bandits.* BENITO *turns on them sternly.*) Silence, there! (*More gently.*) The gold won't get away. We'll see to that if Vasquez bungles it. (*To* ADAM.) Where did you take these chaps—down by the Mule Shoe?

ADAM. Yes; just this side.

BENITO (*to* VASQUEZ). Then you know the ground. Make your own plan. Let's see what you can do.

VASQUEZ. Give us the guns.

BENITO. No, no, my friend—no guns to-day! That's much too easy. Guns will come later—guns and gold when you have shown what stuff you're made of; but no guns to-day. There will be three of them to five of you. You'll see what order they are riding in as they come up the pass. Well—will you tackle it?

VASQUEZ (*to his companions, gruffly*). Come on!

(*Exit* VASQUEZ, SEVILLA, BATISTA, MARTIN *and* MANUEL, L. *The bandits move toward the exit, behind them, looking off in that direction. The curtain descends for a few moments to indicate the passage of some time, and rises again on the same scene with a slightly changed tableau.* BENITO

and ADAM *are standing together near the* L. *exit, looking off intently. The rest of the band are grouped behind them, in easy but alert attitudes, holding their guns ready.*)

BENITO. He's got his men well placed, but still I don't quite see his plan. We'll know it in a minute . . . there they come. . . . (*To the bandits behind him.*) Be ready, you, to fire, but not unless I give the word. If I cry "treachery," pick off Vasquez and the courier's guards. The rest will give no trouble afterwards. . . . (*Two shots are heard at some distance.*) God! Did you see it, Adam? Two of them caught the courier's arms, too quick for him to touch his gun—two of them caught the pack mules with the gold, and Vasquez, with his bare fists, right and left, toppled the guards over the cliff while they were aiming—caught them unawares—timed it so close they fired into the air as they went down! (*After a moment, with the deliberate appraising air of a connoisseur.*) He has qualities, that man Vasquez. There's something to the fellow, Adam, something to him. He has decision. Too little head, perhaps, and too much fist; but each man has his own technique, of course. He has decision. The way he chucked those two men off the cliff! Batista, now, is different. He would have waited, argued, hesitated—maybe made a compromise; hunted out a lower spot and let them fall a paltry hundred feet—perhaps two hundred. With Vasquez, it's *spat spat* (*Striking his fist into the other palm.*)—over they go, the whole two thousand, and he never even looks to see them land! Yes—he has qualities, that man.

ADAM (*with some display of jealousy*). He has the gold, too, and what's to hinder him from making off with it?

BENITO. What's to hinder him? The guards he tumbled off the cliff. What is there for him now down there (*Pointing toward the valleys.*) except the jail and the garrote? He's one of us henceforward, willy-nilly. He's chained up tighter to these hills than ever he had me chained in the cell.

(*Enter* VASQUEZ *and the rest, carrying bags of gold. They have the courier with them, bound.*)

VASQUEZ (*to* BENITO). Well?

BENITO. Good 'prentice work, Vasquez—good 'prentice work. But what's he for?

(*Pointing to the courier.*)

VASQUEZ. Ransom. His folks are rich.

BENITO. Oh! Undo the cords. One of your fellows can take charge of him. (VASQUEZ *motions to* SEVILLA, *who leads the prisoner away, loosening the cords and apparently joking with him aside.* BENITO *continuing, to* VASQUEZ.) Yes, for 'prentice work 'twas excellent. We'll quickly make a journeyman of you. I'll take you and your fellows in my band. Open the bags, Adam. (ADAM *goes toward the bags, the others following, leaving* BENITO *and* VASQUEZ *somewhat apart.*) We pay here on the nail, Vasquez, in just two currencies: gold for good workmen, lead for bad ones. Some wine here, one of you. Let's have a song! (*The* SINGER *begins.*)

CURTAIN

THE PRINCE WITH THE LONG NOSE

Based on a French fairy story of the early eighteenth century, written by Madame Leprince de Beaumont. The action is supposed to take place somewhere in Normandy, about the middle of the seventeenth century, a time when belief in fairies and witches was flaring up here and there prior to extinction.

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

THE KING.
A CHAMBERLAIN.
A FAIRY.
A MAGICIAN.
THE PRINCE.
A TUTOR.
THE FAIRY'S MAID.
THE PRINCESS.

NOTE. *The* KING *is a young man. The* TUTOR *is also a young man in the first act, and the* CHAMBERLAIN *a man of middle age. In the second and third acts they have aged in correspondence with the time supposed to have elapsed—about twenty years. The* FAIRY, *as often in these tales, is a rather matter-of-fact person, apparently altogether human, who grows old like mortals. She is young at the opening of the play, middle-aged at the end of it. The* PRINCESS *of course is young and lovely. The* FAIRY *should have a short nose, or make it appear very short, in the last act.*

ACT I

Scene 1

A room in a royal castle, severe and formal. Entrances at both sides. There are a few state chairs against a background which may be of panelled walls or partly covered by hangings. There must be also a few pictures or statues of great and easily recognized historical or legendary characters, such as Alexander the Great, Caesar, Cicero, Charlemagne, King Arthur or St. George. These are important to the scheme of the play, as disclosed in the second act.

(*Discovered: The* King, *seated in one of the state chairs, displaying a mood of impatient expectancy. Enter shortly the* Chamberlain.)

Chamberlain. She's come, your Majesty—the Fairy whom you called is come. Shall she be ushered in?

King. Zounds, man, what else have we been waiting for? Yes! Bring her in, of course! Make haste and bring her in! (*The* Chamberlain *backs out with a haste which interferes with his attempt at ceremonious dignity. The* King *starts after him in impatience to greet the visitor. Reënter the* Chamberlain, *stalking before the* Fairy. *The* King *hastily brushes him aside, and as the* Fairy *makes a deep curtsey the* King *seizes her hand and raises her, carrying the hand gallantly to his lips.*) Nay, Madame, nay, I pray you! For you, too, are royal. (*To* Chamberlain, *who has recovered a pose of inquisitive interest in the approaching interview.*) You can go.

CHAMBERLAIN (*blankly*). What, your Majesty? (*The* KING *makes a swift gesture of dismissal.*) Oh—yes, your Majesty!

(*Exit* CHAMBERLAIN *with an air of peevish discontent. The* KING *conducts the* FAIRY *to one of the chairs, in which she seats herself. He stands near her.*)

KING. You do me honor, dear Margot-la-Fay, to make this visit.

FAIRY. You do me honor, sir, to ask my help.

KING. And being fairy, you divine what help I need. You know the thing I want.

FAIRY (*laughing*). It takes no fairy lore, your Majesty, to answer that. It is enough to be a woman. Any maiden in her teens could tell you. You want to marry Princess Eulalie.

KING. Then why the devil don't I? Can any maiden in her teens unriddle that?

FAIRY. Ah, no! Not that. She could not tell you that.

KING. For seven years now I have longed for her. I looked at her as at a lovely flower. It seemed I need but to put forth my hand and take her for my own; but when I strive to reach her, or even to approach her, some vague mysterious barrier interposes—something as blank and solid as a wall of stone—and yet invisible, impalpable. There's nothing there, and yet I cannot pass—my longing and my craving cannot pass. They lose themselves in some sort of bewilderment. 'Tis like those endless journeys that one makes in dreams, getting forever farther and farther from his goal.

FAIRY. I know.

KING. 'Tis not that she repulses me. It is not that.

Her eyes call to me, and her heart calls to me, I know; but then, when I would answer . . .

FAIRY. I know.

KING. So might a night-moth strain to reach a flower whose perfume and whose honey cry to him, while an insistent wind, unseen, insidious, forever baffles his approach—forever pushes back his eager wings!

FAIRY. I know.

KING. Then tell me! Tell me what it is!

FAIRY. It is the spell of an enchanter—a magician. It is a spell.

KING. And can you show me how to break it?

FAIRY. I would not else have come.

KING. Then tell me quickly what there is to do!

FAIRY. He is a strong enchanter, evil, but powerful. I cannot overpower him completely. When I break this spell, or show you how to break it, he may lay another.

KING. On her—another spell on her?

FAIRY. Perhaps on you. Perhaps on someone else. Another spell, but 'twill be something different. It must be something different.

KING. I'll dare the chance. Tell me what I must do. I'll risk my life if need be, so I gain the Princess Eulalie!

FAIRY. Well spoken, sir, as doth befit a king; regal and picturesque, but quite unnecessary. The question here is not of risk of life—rather of risk of dignity and a few strips of skin. The question is not can you die right royally, but can you catch a cat—a nimble and resourceful pussy-cat?

KING. A pussy-cat? What pussy-cat? Why should I catch a pussy-cat?

FAIRY. Her cat—her big black cat. The big black cat that always follows her around.

KING. Yes, yes! I know the cat!

FAIRY. That is the form the great enchanter takes to follow her and weave his spell—to weave the constant spell.

KING. What must I do then? Kill the cat?

FAIRY. No, no! Not kill the cat! Tread on its tail!

KING. And then?

FAIRY. The sorcerer will have to take his natural shape and break the spell.

KING. That should be easy!

FAIRY. Try it. It will not be so easy as it sounds; but 'tis the only way. Can you find the cat?

KING. The cat is here; the Princess and the cat are here. I saw him just a while ago, stalking across the throne-room. Hist! Here he comes! (*The* KING *and the* FAIRY *seem to see a cat entering*, L. *It is not visible to the audience, as there is actually no cat on the stage. They watch it cross*, R., *and return along the back wall.* KING, *coaxingly, stooping and holding out his hand, beckoning with one finger.*) Kitty, kitty, kitty—nice kitty! (*To* FAIRY.) Look at that tail—straight up and waving like a snake about to strike!

FAIRY. Hush! Don't notice him too much. Wait . . .

(*The* KING *stealthily steals after the invisible cat, stops, and in a moment indicates to the* FAIRY *by imitative motions that the cat has stopped and is washing its face. He moves toward it with elaborate caution, raises his foot, and brings it down suddenly, but at once shows by the motion of his eyes and hand that the cat has jumped away.*)

KING. Kitty, kitty, kitty, kitty—here! don't let him get away! Stop him! Head him off! Kitty, kitty,

kitty, kitty! (*The* FAIRY *jumps in front of the* L. *exit, shaking her skirts, while the* KING *blocks the* R. *exit in similar fashion, the cat appearing to dash from one to the other. After a moment things quiet down. The* KING *signals to the* FAIRY *that he has another idea. He takes out his handkerchief and dangles it with a wiggling motion, drawing the corner slowly across the floor.*) Kitty, kitty, kitty, kitty! Kitty come catch mousie! Kitty come catch nice mousie! (*The* KING, *by two or three slight starts, indicates the cat's approach in a series of short rushes. Then he dances about, wiggling the handkerchief and trying first with one foot and then with the other to step on the elusive tail as it apparently whisks from side to side, ad lib. After a while, flustered and out of breath.*) It would be easier to catch quicksilver! Let's wait until he quiets down again. (*After a moment, wheedlingly, stooping and beckoning.*) Nice kitty! Come let papa scratch his head for him! Come, kitty; papa rub his back. Kitty, kitty, kitty, kitty! (*He rises slowly, and seems to watch the cat coming toward him until it is at his feet.*) Nice kitty! Come! Kitty rub his head on papa's legs . . . (*He stoops cautiously, makes a grab as if to catch the beast, struggles with an active resistance, and jumps up with a fierce "Ouch!" clasping his wrist and putting it to his mouth as if to suck a scratch.*) Stop him! Stop him! Don't let him get away! (*The* FAIRY *makes an evidently unsuccessful effort to block the* L. *exit.*) He's gone!

FAIRY. I told you that it wouldn't be so easy.

KING. I'll get him yet—the devil!

(*Caressing his wrist.*)

FAIRY. You'll have to watch and catch him un-

awares. (*The* KING's *eyes suddenly become fixed on a spot on the floor just at the exit,* L. *The* FAIRY, *following his gaze, stares at the same spot.*) His tail! What is he doing? What . . .

KING (*in an excited but hushed voice*). He's found that mouse-hole by the door, and he is watching it!

(KING *creeps cautiously in that direction.*)

FAIRY. Carefully—carefully! Wait till the tail stops switching! Wait till the tail gets quiet! Now—it's almost stopped. Carefully—carefully . . . Now!

KING (*bringing his foot down with emphasis*). Got him!

(*There is a frightful caterwauling just off stage during which the* FAIRY *makes a hasty exit,* R. *Enter,* L., *the* MAGICIAN—*a huge man with menacing air and angry eyes. He is much bewhiskered, the manner of growth of his whiskers suggesting as far as possible the head of a cat. The* KING *falls back as he advances—not, however, with any air of cringing. He shows astonishment rather than fear. He retires to a point near* C. *stage, and they stand facing one another, the bluster of the* MAGICIAN *subsiding somewhat.*)

MAGICIAN. So! You've done it. You have broke the spell—*that* spell! Marry your Princess, since you've broke the spell. Marry her, I say—marry her! (*His voice rises angrily.*) Don't think, though, that you're done with me! Oh, no! Oh, no! (*Rubs his back ruefully at the point where the cat's tail grew. The* KING *laughs.*) I'll give you a reminder, too, my king, will make you laugh upon the other side—will hurt you

in another way, you and your Princess, too. I'll have a long revenge—revenge as long as—long as—your son's nose! That's it! You'll have a son; your son shall have a nose so long that all the world shall laugh at him, and he shall have it till he finds a way to break *that* spell. And if you ever breathe to mortal man or woman that it is a spell, or that it can be broken, you shall die upon the spot. (*As he turns to go out.*) Marry your Princess! Marry your Princess! Go and marry her!

(*Exit* MAGICIAN. *The* KING *paces to and fro, in a brown study. Reënter the* FAIRY, R.)

KING (*looking up and seeing her*). You heard?

FAIRY. I heard him; yes, I heard him. I feared it might turn out in some such way. You know, I told you . . . But, of course, I could not tell what he might do.

KING. What can you do to break this second spell?

FAIRY. Not much, and nothing now. He is too powerful. I cannot break the spell that gives your son the monstrous nose. I cannot break the spell that brings you death if you so much as mention what he said to any mortal. 'Tis well for you that I am not a mortal, or you would have fallen lifeless when you spoke about the spell.

KING. But *you* can tell him—you can tell my son about the spell, and maybe show him how to break it?

FAIRY. No—that I cannot do. The fairy law forbids. The magic is that nobody can tell him, and if they did, it would avail him nothing. The thought and impulse of the counter-magic must be all his own.

KING. Then what can you do?

FAIRY. All I can do is this: I can tell *you* what will

undo the curse upon your son. Remember, though, that if you in turn tell him, or anybody, then the charm will lose its power. It will not work.

KING. Tell me.

FAIRY. The moment when your son discovers that his nose is monstrous—the moment when he wishes it away—it will become a normal, fine, well-shapen nose like that of any handsome man.

KING (*laughing scornfully*). Why, then, this wizard's spell is just no spell at all! For if my son be neither blind nor armless, he can see his nose, or feel it. As soon as he has any sense at all, he'll know it is too big, and wish it smaller—and that will be the end of it!

FAIRY. But will he—will he realize it is too big?

KING. Of course he will. Why not?

FAIRY. He might, you know, think others' noses were too small.

KING. Nonsense! And if he did, someone would tell him.

FAIRY. Perhaps . . . but . . . No, I am not sure. I am not sure at all. For he will be a king's son, and later on, himself a king. Kings and sons of kings so rarely hear the truth that makes them see themselves for what they are.

KING. Oh, I don't know. I don't agree to that!

FAIRY (*drily*). Exactly! (*They move toward the exit.*) Well, we shall see. Remember, though, that any breath of hint from you kills any hope of remedy forever. . . . I am not sure, your Majesty. Kings rarely know the truth about themselves. . . .

[*Exeunt* KING *and* FAIRY.

CURTAIN

END OF SCENE 1

Scene 2

About a year later. The same setting as Scene 1.

(*Discovered: The* Chamberlain *and the* Tutor, *pacing up and down. From the distance, outside the castle, comes the sound of the firing of guns and ringing of bells.*)

Chamberlain. Dear God! Dear God! The guns—the bells—the people out there hoarse with shouting in their joy because a prince is born! And then, up-stairs, that nose! All I could see, all that I can see now (Good God! I wish I could forget that I had ever seen it!) is just that nose!

Tutor. Poor baby! (Chamberlain, *instead of answering, makes a gesture with his hand across his face, up and down his face, and out from it, indicating a nose gigantic in all three dimensions.*) Poor mother, too! She has seen, of course?

Chamberlain. Of course—of course! (*With a gesture of despair.*) That nose!

Tutor. What did she do?

Chamberlain. Do? Do? How do I know? That's something for the ladies of the bedchamber to deal with. Had hysterics, I believe. That nose—that dreadful nose!

Tutor. What could they say to her to comfort her?

Chamberlain. What could they *say?* Yes, yes—what *could* they say! Talk of his lovely eyes, perhaps, his little rosebud mouth—make her believe his nose was . . . well, something that often happens; a noble Roman nose that he'd grow up to. He is her first, of course, and she is inexperienced. She is a mother, and

she is a queen. It will not be so hard to deal with her. His father, now, if he had lived, would not have been so credulous.

TUTOR. It was a mercy, after all, from certain points of view, he died before the Prince was born.

CHAMBERLAIN. For him, most surely. To see himself and his successor made a laughing-stock throughout all Normandy! Yes, 'tis a mercy that he cannot know. (*After a pause during which he seems to be thinking.*) He had some premonition of mischance about the child. I could see that, whenever it was spoken of. And when he knew his end was near and certain, he tried to tell me something, but it was too late. He could not utter it. Ah, well—the King is dead—long live the King. Even with such a nose. That is the way it goes. God gives us kings; we have to take them as they come from His Mysterious Hand and do the best we can with them —or, maybe, do the best we can in spite of them. But what He could have been thinking of when that great royal nose was fashioned—that I can't conceive. I think it must have happened when His back was turned. However, now 'tis done, and can't be undone. The question now is what to do . . . what to do!

TUTOR (*meditatively*). Yes; what to do. The prince's nose is, as you say, *un fait accompli.* The nose is what we start from.

CHAMBERLAIN. "Start from" is good. You would, if you had seen it. The trouble is we'll never get away from it. God knows how glad I'd be if I could start from it and never, never see it, never hear of it again! Well—there it is, and there it's going to keep on growing. The nose can't be remade to fit the world. We'll have to make a world to fit the nose.

TUTOR. How do you mean? How can we make a world to suit a nose like that?

CHAMBERLAIN. Simple enough, in principle. The details may be difficult, but what are statesmen for if not to deal with difficulties—crises, you know, and all that sort of thing? Well—here we have a crisis (my God, that nose!) . . . Look here: (*Holds up his left hand and checks off his points on the fingers of it.*) Our major premise is: (*Touching the thumb.*) the prince's nose is what a royal nose should be; all noble princes' noses were and are and should be like to that; long noses go with greatness. Good. Then, (*Touching the other four fingers in turn.*) adapt your history, rewrite your literature, remodel fashion and reform your art to correspond. You see what I am driving at?

TUTOR. Yes, partly . . . but . . .

CHAMBERLAIN. Think over it. Think over it and think it out. It's good we have a little time to work in, before the child takes notice; but it can't be done too soon. Your part of it will be to train the prince—to train him from the very first in that idea. Mine will be to mould the court accordingly. Ummmmmmm. (*Looks at the pictures and statues, one by one.*) Yes . . . I see already something to be done. Yes . . . retouching, here and there. Send the court painter to me, will you, as you're going out?

(*Exit the* TUTOR. *The* CHAMBERLAIN, *with his hands behind his back, moves from one of the portraits to another, gazing at them thoughtfully.*)

CURTAIN

END OF ACT I

ACT II

About twenty years later.

Same general setting as the preceding act. The portraits and statues have all been retouched so as to exhibit extraordinarily large noses, and additional portraits of large-nosed heroes have been hung. Down stage, R., *there is a table covered with books and papers. Two chairs are placed at it.*

(*Discovered: The* CHAMBERLAIN, *seated at the table, fingering some of the papers; the* TUTOR, *standing near him. Their noses appear somewhat larger than in the preceding act, and as they talk they occasionally pull at them or mould them with their hands. They have naturally aged otherwise in accord with the supposed lapse of time.*)

CHAMBERLAIN (*as if closing a conference, gathering up some of the papers and rising to go*). Is that all for to-day?

TUTOR. Sir, if you have a minute more, I want to show you now the model of that feature-builder that I spoke of. (*He takes from his pocket, or from the table, a model of a mechanical device. It is a sort of box, in one side of which is an opening into which the nose can be inserted; there are a couple of levers on another side, and two thongs to fasten behind the head and keep it in place.*) You see, sir, it may be adjusted thus. (*He fits it over his nose, and continues in exaggerated nasal tones.*) It fits the contours of the nose; the thongs are fastened neatly just behind the head, and . . .

CHAMBERLAIN. Wait—wait! I can't make out a word you say!

TUTOR (*speaking entirely through the mouth, very flatly*). I say, it fits the codtours of the dose; the thoggs are fasted deatly just behide, add . . .

CHAMBERLAIN. Take it off! Take it off and tell me with it off, if I'm to understand what you are saying!

TUTOR (*removing the device and holding it in his hand*). I say, it fits the contours of the nose; the thongs are fastened neatly just behind the head, and by a pressure on the lever here (*Indicating.*) the mechanism's started. Two supple fingers faced with kid, in here (*Indicating.*) then grip the nose with gentle firmness, and apply a combination traction and massage—mild to begin with, naturally, but increased at will. This stimulates the circulation, leads to growth of tissue, makes the cartilage and skin elastic, moulds the nose to any shape desired, according to the fashion of this chamber here. (*Indicating.*) They can be made in Roman, Greek or Gothic, Semitic . . .

CHAMBERLAIN (*taking the model in his hand and turning it over and over*). Ummmm . . .

TUTOR. Think, sir, of all the hours that have been spent by mothers since our prince was born, pulling their offsprings' noses in the effort to resemble his! (CHAMBERLAIN *and* TUTOR *mechanically pull their own noses at the suggestion.*) And after all, they look like pug-noses and snubs when placed beside him! Now, with this little helper in the nursery, after the bath and bottle, while the infant sleeps . . .

CHAMBERLAIN. Hist! Hide it! Hide it! Here comes the prince himself! We'll talk about it later. (*Enter the* PRINCE. CHAMBERLAIN *and* TUTOR *bow deeply. The* PRINCE, *who is a handsome young man except for a nose about three times the normal size, acknowledges their obeisance graciously and seats himself at the table. As the* PRINCE *enters.*) Your Highness!

(*After he is seated.*) Your Highness will excuse me now if I withdraw? I have permission?

PRINCE. Yes, yes. Oh, by the way, have you those lists?

CHAMBERLAIN. Lists, your Highness?

PRINCE. Yes, lists—promotion lists. The lists of data for promotions in the army.

CHAMBERLAIN. Ah, yes. The lists are made. I'll bring them to your Highness shortly. I may withdraw?

PRINCE (*abstractedly, as he looks into a book*). Yes —surely, surely! (*Exit* CHAMBERLAIN. PRINCE, *turning the leaves.*) I wanted to refresh my memory as to that passage in the Commentaries on the Gallic War, where Cæsar . . . here it is . . . no, that's not it . . . where Cæsar chronicles the valor of the Belgians and the Swiss, which he attributes to . . . (*Stopping to examine a passage.*) which he attributes to their noses.

TUTOR. Ah, yes, your Highness; near the beginning of Book One.

PRINCE (*turning to first page, and running his finger down it*). Yes; here it is: "horum omnium"—of all these (that is, of course, of all the Gauls), "fortissimi sunt Belgæ"—the Belgians are the bravest; "propterea quod"—*because*—that is the thing I'm looking for . . . "propterea quod"—*because*—"nasos longissimos habent"—they have the longest noses. And then he goes on: "qua de causa"—for which cause, "Helvetii quoque"—the Helvetians (or Swiss) also, "reliquos Gallos virtute præcedunt"—excel the rest of the Gauls in valor. I think that will silence him.

TUTOR. Silence whom, your Highness?

PRINCE. Silence my guest, Prince Hubert. He disputes the text. He says he can't recall it. He thinks

the Commentaries he studied had some other reading—something fantastic about Belgium being most remote from Rome and its effeminacy, and the martial spirit of the Swiss being inflamed by border quarrels with the other tribes.

TUTOR. A garbled or corrupted text, no doubt.

PRINCE. Altered, perhaps, by flatterers, lest he realize his own shortcomings. Look at his nose!

(*He indicates with his fingers a nose of ordinary length.*)

TUTOR. Ah! That might be. Yes . . . that might account for it . . . unless, of course, his memory is quite at fault. The passage, as you see, is clear enough.

PRINCE. Yes. I must show him. It is better he should know the truth. He should be warned. I don't see how his dynasty could stand a long succession of short noses. Something should be done about it.

TUTOR. A shrewd and a well-founded fear, your Highness, for the nose is index of things spiritual. (*He falls into a professorial manner of speaking.*) We need not now take up the question whether it is the mind that shapes the nose, or whether 'tis the nose affects the mind. Enough that they are great together when the man is great. What did the poet Martial say? Your Highness will recall the reference—I. 42. 18—"non cuicumque"—not to everyone, "datum est"—is it given, "habere nasum"—to have a nose; that is, of course, a worth-while nose. In other words, distinguished noses are the mark of the distinguished few. (*The* PRINCE *absent-mindedly caresses his nose as the discourse proceeds.*) And Cicero, you will recall, in his oration "De Deorum Natura"—on the nature of the

gods—speaks of the nose as "rising like a wall between the eyes"—in the Latin, "nasus quasi murus oculis interiectus." No trifling, ordinary nose does that. The nose that does, he would imply, is god-like. His very name, indeed, of Cicero, was given him by virtue of the fine protuberance—the "cicer," as the Latin has it, that adorned his nose. The poet Ovid had the surname "Naso"—"with a nose"—that is, a nose of mark; notably nosed. And in the family of Scipio, the surname "Nasica"—"long-nosed"—was treasured as an honor. Which of the consuls was reputed the most virtuous of his time? Publius Cornelius Scipio *Nasica;* the long-nosed Publius Cornelius Scipio. Plutarch informs us Solon and Lycurgus had great noses. Numa Pompilius, founder of Rome's religion and of her majestic institutions, social and economic, had a nose, or so tradition says, six inches long.

Prince (*pulling his own nose strongly to make it still longer*). Exactly! And, as you have shown me, on the other hand, the emperors of evil memory—Nero, Caligula and Caracalla—all had noses of deficient length.

Tutor. 'Tis well and rightly recollected, sir, and greatly to the point. Nor need the demonstration stop with Greece and Rome. We are not limited to records secular. When the Lord Himself chose out a people for His own—His sword to smite the heathen and drive out the Philistines—the Hivites, Jebusites, Amalekites and all the rest—whom did He choose? He chose a race with noses that amount to something! And coming hitherward again adown the centuries, whose noses do we see shining like beacons set to mark great epochs of the world? Rameses Second, sometimes called Sesostris; the mighty Alexander; Cæsar himself; Cato the Censor; Constantine, Cortez and Pizarro—or, in gen-

tler spheres, Chaucer and Shakespeare, Michael Angelo —all great-nosed men!

PRINCE (*caressing his nose*). True! True!

TUTOR. Take it, again, on grounds of anthropology. The lowest races have a nose that makes less than a quarter of the profile; then come the yellow peoples with a fourth; in the highest type, the pure Caucasian, it has reached a third. With the superman it will be half—pardon, your Highness—will you turn your profile? (TUTOR, *seizing a ruler or quill from the table, scales the* PRINCE's *profile, artist fashion.*) Yes; a half or more!

PRINCE (*still caressing his nose*). I must do what I can to help poor Hubert. I must not let them flatter him into indifference about his danger. . . . (*Enter* CHAMBERLAIN. PRINCE, *to* CHAMBERLAIN.) Ah! Here's our Chamberlain again. You have the lists?

CHAMBERLAIN. I have them, sir.

(*Hands the* PRINCE *several large sheets of paper or parchment.*)

PRINCE. Ummmmmm . . . Let's see; let's see. These are the general officers, with all their qualities arranged in order? (CHAMBERLAIN *bows confirmation.*) Good; yes . . . Yes . . . (PRINCE *barely glances at the first sheets as he reads their titles and sets them aside, one after another.*) "Record of Past Achievements" . . . "Services to the State" . . . "Experience in the Field" . . . "Recommendations" . . . Ah! Here's the one I want—the "Nasal Index." These are the computations of the Chief Astronomer?

CHAMBERLAIN. Yes, sir.

PRINCE. How are they based?

CHAMBERLAIN. Based on all three dimensions, as

your Highness ordered. The width and height are duly recognized, but not, of course, as fully weighted as the length. That was your Highness' own suggestion. The formula, the chief astronomer explained to me, is very intricate, but 'tis deduced from observation of your Highness' nose.

PRINCE. Ah!

CHAMBERLAIN. Your Highness' nose is taken as the standard, on a base of ten, and others graded by their proved relations to it. Of course, they all fall short.

PRINCE. Of course! Of course! The thing is to see who comes the nearest to it. (*Reading.*) Lestroc, Marigny, d'Evricourt, d'Estrasse, Paulignac . . . Paulignac! He's our man. He leads with six point two. Let him be Marshal of the Kingdom. Give him the baton of the chief command.

CHAMBERLAIN. Paulignac! . . . Yes, your Highness . . . but . . . Marigny, sir, has had more test of war. 'Twas he repulsed the English in your father's time. Paulignac never drew his sword excepting to salute your Highness, and no one knows . . .

PRINCE (*breaking in*). Marigny, marshal, with a nose of four point nine? A man with less than half the standard nose? Impossible! What would you say, Sir Tutor? Did the conquerors you named just now—Sesostris, Alexander, Cæsar and Constantine, Cortez and Pizarro—did they have noses that were only four point nine?

TUTOR (*looking uncomfortably from the* PRINCE *to the* CHAMBERLAIN *and back again*). Well, sir . . . 'tis difficult to say there might not be exceptions to the rule. Your Highness will recall de Borron, in his Book of Merlin, (the reference, I think, is two, three-twenty-one) the passage being, as your Highness knows, King Arthur's battle with the other kings. He says—de

Borron says—Sir Groinge, who led the ninth attack, although a noble knight as to his body, yet "hadde no gretter nose than hath a catte." A cat's nose, sir, would be much less than four point nine; but Arthur gave him the command.

PRINCE. Yes—and what then? de Borron does not tell of any victory. Sir Groinge is never heard of afterward. No, no! We will not follow Arthur's precedent in this. Paulignac is the man. (*To* CHAMBERLAIN.) Have his commission drawn.

(*Hands* CHAMBERLAIN *the papers.*)

CHAMBERLAIN. It shall be as you order, sir.

(*Exit, looking gloomily at the lists in his hands.*)

PRINCE (*pacing up and down*). There should be something done, Sir Tutor, to improve the race—to breed out noses that are only four point nine. (*He looks around at the pictures and statues.*) This gallery . . . I wonder . . . if expectant mothers, now, were given freedom of this gallery . . . in fact, were made to spend some hours of each day here . . . Ummmmmm . . . We'll ask the court physician . . .

(*The* PRINCE *stops suddenly, as if struck by a disturbing thought. In a moment he resumes his pacing but with an agitated stride and a marked change of demeanor. The* TUTOR *watches him curiously.*)

TUTOR (*after a pause*). Your Highness is disturbed?

PRINCE Yes . . . this question of heredity . . .

TUTOR (*puzzled*). The question of heredity, your Highness?

PRINCE. The throne . . . the dynasty . . . the matter of my heir . . . my marriage . . .

TUTOR. Your Highness' marriage with the Princess Mignonne, recently arranged?

PRINCE. Exactly.

TUTOR (*increasingly puzzled*). But I supposed, sir, that reasons of great state inspired the match!

PRINCE. They do—they do!

TUTOR. And—pardon, your Highness—I supposed the marriage was extremely to your liking—the rarest of all lovely things, a royal marriage based on love.

PRINCE. It is—it is! or must I say, it would be? Although I know her only from afar, I love her dearly!

TUTOR. Then why, sir . . . why . . .

PRINCE. You've seen her picture?

(*Takes a miniature from his bosom and hands it to* TUTOR.)

TUTOR. A lovely face, indeed!

PRINCE. Look at her nose.

TUTOR. A charming nose!

PRINCE (*taking back the picture and gazing at it*). A charming nose! A most alluring nose! A piquant nose! But is it not a short, although seductive, nose? A dear, but yet tip-tilted, nose? To put it briefly as the nose itself, a real retroussé nose?

TUTOR. Ah! I think I glimpse your Highness' thought. . . . Your Highness fears . . .

PRINCE. Exactly! My thought . . . my fear is that there might be certain risk . . . whether it would be right to . . . well, as you might say, to dilute my nose, in case of offspring from this union? Or must I sacrifice my heart to save my nose—to save, that is, our great dynastic nose?

(*They both pace up and down agitatedly.*)

TUTOR (*after a short pause, with rapidly returning composure*). The doubt, sir, does great credit to your conscience; yet it seems to me that we may think a passage through it to the light. The first suggestion that presents itself to me is of your royal mother's nose.

PRINCE. Ah . . . yes!

TUTOR. 'Tis not a large nose, sir; 'tis small and feminine. Yet see your Highness' nose!

PRINCE. That's true . . . that's true!

TUTOR (*regaining the professorial manner*). True, sir, and as it seems to me, conclusive. However, if your Highness would find proofs less personal, let us again, sir, turn to history. Our mother Eve is never pictured with a mighty nose, yet she has had great sons a-plenty. Venus, Helen of Troy and Cleopatra, all were short-nosed ladies; in fact, the nose of Cleopatra was tip-tilted, yet she shook the eastern and the western world and shaped the destiny of nations. No, sir, the rule that governs men, here as in other things, does not apply to women. The nose, we might say, has two elements: one—common to the race—the nose as simple feature of the countenance; the other, emblematic, signifying greatness, appearing only in the case of heroes. This second element is masculine, and masculine alone, like to the deep bass voice, the beard. You would not seek to wed a bearded lady, nor a female basso (or should we say, bassa?) for fear your son might be bare-faced or speak in a falsetto? No! Then have as little care to choose a great-nosed wife. No, sir, let the dictates of State and of the heart control you. Marry the Princess!

(*He wipes his brow with an air of great relief.*)

PRINCE (*delightedly clapping the* TUTOR *on the*

shoulder). As masterly a demonstration that, Sir Tutor, as I have ever heard! A splendid thesis, splendidly delivered! Your stipend shall be doubled from this day. Our University shall give you a degree—yes! two degrees! I'll give the orders to the Chancellor to-day!

(*Enter* CHAMBERLAIN *hastily, in great excitement.*)

CHAMBERLAIN (*as he comes on*). Sir! Sir! the Princess Mignonne! Disappeared!

PRINCE. Disappeared . . . the princess disappeared? What are you thinking of . . . what . . . how . . .

CHAMBERLAIN. On her way hither, sir, for the betrothal. Her escort recklessly essayed to take the short-cut through the Haunted Forest. Some spell of the Magician fell on her—she disappeared!

PRINCE. Magician? Spell? What are you talking of? Send out the hue-and-cry! Send out the army! Search every nook and cranny of the kingdom!

CHAMBERLAIN. It shall be done, sir, instantly; but, sir . . . I am an old man, and I served your father long ere you were born. I know, sir, that the old ideas are jeered at—but there is a way your father took to break a spell laid by this same magician, to block his marriage with the queen. If your Highness would . . .

PRINCE. My father? Tell me! I will try anything to find the Princess. Tell me!

CHAMBERLAIN. There is an ancient fairy, sir—Margot-la-fay—who helped your father. If your Highness would consent to go . . .

PRINCE (*breaking in, to* TUTOR). Have them bring my horse. You, too, prepare to ride with me. (TUTOR

rushes off. PRINCE, *to* CHAMBERLAIN.) Where is this fairy? Tell me how to find her!

(PRINCE *and* CHAMBERLAIN *follow* TUTOR *off, the* CHAMBERLAIN *explaining inaudibly but with much gesticulation as they make their exit.*)

CURTAIN

END OF ACT II

ACT III

Toward evening of the next day.

An interior in the FAIRY'S *palace. It is a comfortable sitting-room, in harmony with the period of the play, but otherwise such as any kindly spinster of fifty-odd might furnish and arrange for her own use; bright chintz curtains and covers, books, flowers, a work basket, a tea-table, and easy-chairs. There are entrances at both sides. There may be windows at the back looking into a garden, but they are not necessary.*

(*Discovered:* PRINCE *and* TUTOR, *in riding costume. The* PRINCE *is moving about the room, looking at the pictures, the furniture, etc. The* TUTOR *stands by the table examining a book.*)

PRINCE. She is long enough in coming!

TUTOR. I think, sir, from the maid's manner, that Margot was asleep—taking a nap.

PRINCE. Perhaps—perhaps. (*Looks about the room.*) This certainly was never my idea of fairy-land!

TUTOR. The tales, sir, picture something different, indeed! But then, the fairy world moves, like our own. I've heard that she is very up-to-date.

PRINCE. You're sure she is a fairy?

TUTOR. About the only fairy, sir, still . . . practising, if I may use the word. The others vanished when the world discarded the traditions of our childhood—when the world ceased to believe in them. She survives because she has kept up with the times. She's very practical.

PRINCE. I hope she's practical enough to give us tea. I'm nearly famished.

(*Both turn and look toward the* L. *entrance, as the* MAID's *voice is heard.*)

MAID (*off stage,* L.). Yes, Madame.

FAIRY (*ditto*). And don't forget to have the teapot hot—to have it very hot—and be quite sure the kettle's boiling.

PRINCE. Thank God!

FAIRY (*continuing, off stage*). And plenty of toast—good buttered toast, but not too brown . . .

MAID (*off stage*). Yes, Madame, just as Madame said before. The gentlemen are waiting for Madame.

FAIRY (*entering* L., *trying to adjust her spectacles on a nose so short she has difficulty in keeping them in place*). And have it . . . (*She catches sight of the* PRINCE's *nose, touches her own, and makes a slight gesture toward his as if in comparison; then she begins to laugh. The* PRINCE, *with a similar gesture, begins to laugh also. The* TUTOR, *in embarrassment, slips off,* R.) Oh, what a funny nose!

PRINCE (*somewhat stiffly*). Funny? Why funny? You will pardon me, Madame, for saying that even when allowances are made for sex, your own is funnier—much funnier! (*Laughs.*)

FAIRY. Mine? Mine? But look at yours! (*Laughs.*)

PRINCE (*more stiffly*). May I suggest, Madame, we

leave our noses as they are and think about the tea I heard you ordering? I and my tutor . . . (*Looking around.*) where is he gone to? . . . I and my tutor are nearly famished.

FAIRY. With all my heart, dear Prince; for, in spite of your fantastic nose (*Giving way to laughter again.*)—it really is ridiculous, that nose—in spite, though, of your nose, you are the dear son of my dearest friend. I loved your father like a brother. He had a well-made nose, your father had!

PRINCE (*bridling*). And will you tell me what mine lacks?

FAIRY. Nothing—nothing, indeed! Oh, quite the contrary! That's just the trouble. It is not what it lacks, but what it overdoes! But never mind; a man can be a right good sort and still possess too long a nose. I told you that (MAID *steps on,* R., *as if to ask a question, hesitates, makes a hopeless gesture behind the* FAIRY'S *back, puts her fingers in her ears, and goes out again, seen only by the* PRINCE. *The* FAIRY *babbles on without the slightest break in the stream.*) your father was my friend. He came to see me often in those early days. And *à propos* of that, I wonder if you ever heard how pretty I was then? I must tell you of the talk we had the last time that he came to see me. He had come, you see . . .

PRINCE (*breaking in*). After he'd had his tea, perhaps. Tell me, dear Madame, by and by, when I've had mine. I'll listen gladly when I've had some tea. Remember, please, I have not had a bite all day!

FAIRY. Poor boy—that's so! I had forgotten. You shall have some tea, and after that I'll tell you the whole story in four words. I do dislike long con- (*Business of entry of* MAID *repeated, the* FAIRY *talking along unconscious of her entry.*) versations. A long tongue

really is much worse than a long nose. You know, when I was young, I was admired not only for my beauty, but because I was so taciturn. There's nothing quite so wearisome as chatterboxes. And that is why they used to tell my mother—for—you know, just as you see me now, I am the daughter of a great king. My father . . .

PRINCE (*breaking in*). Your father, Madame, doubtless had had tea, and maybe even dinner. He ate when he was hungry.

FAIRY. Yes, yes! No doubt; and you are going to eat directly. You sha'n't be asked to listen until you have eaten. I wasn't going to make you wait. I was only going to say, my father . . .

PRINCE (*breaking in again impatiently*). And if you're going to say, I am not going to listen until I eat! (*More gently.*) I know the pleasure I should have in listening would make me soon forget my hunger —but, Madame, think of my poor horse. He cannot understand you—we are all in need of food!

FAIRY (*clapping her hands twice*). Yes, yes! of course! (*Enter the* MAID. FAIRY, *to* MAID.) See that the Prince's horse is fed.

MAID. Yes, Madame. Madame is so thoughtful!

[*Exit* MAID.

FAIRY. You shall not wait any longer, for despite your most tremendous nose, you are a most agreeable young man. I will wait until you have had tea before I tell you what my father said. It was only that . . .

PRINCE (*despairingly*). Madame! my tea!

FAIRY. Dear, dear! thinking about the horse, I overlooked the tea. Marie! . . . she's gone about the horse . . . wait.

(*Exit* FAIRY, *bustlingly,* L. *Reënter* TUTOR, R.)

PRINCE (*to* TUTOR). Drat the woman and her harping on my nose! A man might think my mother stole the nose that Margot should have had to make mine bigger! If I weren't so hungry, I would run away from this old chatterbox who thinks she is no talker.

TUTOR. 'Tis trying, sir, but bear in mind the help you need to find the Princess.

PRINCE. Yes, yes! One must be patient. Of course, one must be patient with old people. It goes to show, though, how flattery may blind a woman to her own faults. That's what it is to have been born a princess. Flatterers make her think she is a silent woman. (*Enter* MAID *with tea tray, which she sets on the table. She goes out again.* PRINCE *picks up something and begins to eat, talking as he does so.*) Parbleu! I'm glad I came here, after all. This shows me how wise I am never to listen to my flatterers. Those folk will praise one with effrontery, hiding one's faults and making them out perfections. But as for me, I'll never be their dupe. Thank God, I know my faults.

(*Enter the* FAIRY. *The* PRINCE *seats her at the tea-table and takes a chair near her, the* TUTOR, *at the* PRINCE'S *gesture, taking one at the other side.*)

FAIRY (*pouring tea*). My Prince, pray turn yourself a little, if you please. Your nose creates a shadow that obscures the table. I can't see what I'm doing. (*As the* PRINCE *shifts his position.*) There—that's better. Let us talk about your father. He was a boy when I was at his court, some thirty years ago; but, as I said, he came to see me afterwards on some such errand as the one that brings you here to-day . . . My! but your nose is long!

PRINCE. So, Madame, if you've studied history, were Rameses', Cæsar's and Alexander's, Cato's and Cicero's

. . . but who has told you what my errand is to-day?

FAIRY. The very question that your father asked—take some more toast—and as I said to him—is your tea right?—and as I said to him—what use to be a fairy if one does not know such things as that? But tell me of the present life at court; do all the ladies still go gadding round to promenades, levees, the ball and the Casino . . . I surely never saw so long a nose!

PRINCE. One thing the ladies do *not* do is talk of noses! I wish that you would do the same! But now about my errand . . .

FAIRY (*breaking in*). I see that you are annoyed at me, dear Prince. I do not want to irritate you. Quite the contrary, I am your friend and mean to serve you. Nevertheless, I can't deny that I am shocked about your nose. However, I will do my best to say no more about it. I will forget how long it really is. Indeed, I will pretend it is a snub—although, to tell the truth, there is enough material in it to make three proper noses.

PRINCE (*rising angrily*). I shall have indigestion if this thing goes on! Madame, with your permission I will take my tea and finish in the garden. (*Starts off* R.; *to* TUTOR, *who rises also.*) No; you stay here.

[*Exit* PRINCE.

TUTOR (*seating himself again after the* PRINCE *is gone*). Madame, if you could manage to forget the nose . . .

FAIRY. Let be, Sir Tutor. Your suggestion's kindly meant—but still, let be. I have to work my magic as I can, in modern fashion. In my young days, I should have sent the Prince to climb the Flaming Mountain at the world's end, and to bring back the golden bird that sings a thousand songs; or bid him fell the forest in a night, and pile the wood in cords before the dawn or

never see his lady-love again. Ah me! yes. In my young days these things were different. We fairies were all robed in gossamer, and spent the whole night dancing with the moonbeams in the air. And now I wear a flannel night-robe, and sleep with a hot-water bottle, after the maid has warmed the covers with a warming-pan. The times have changed, sir, and we have changed with them.

(*The light begins to fade, as if the sun were setting. If there are windows at the back, they suggest the deepening dusk and the sunset glow in the sky.*)

TUTOR. But, Madame, I don't see . . .

FAIRY. No, sir, you don't see yet, and I can't tell you. The world is full of magic still, Sir Tutor; I don't know myself where it begins nor where it ends. They call me "up-to-date," but in some things, at heart, I still am hopelessly old-fashioned. The old spells—the old charms—fairies of the younger generation all pooh-pooh them—call them hocus-pocus; but we who were brought up under them, although we think we have outgrown them . . . It might not do a bit of harm to tell you, but I dare not take the chance. I'll tell you this: a spell was laid upon the Prince before his birth; he must discover for himself the way to break it. All I dare do is lead him—push him—toward the way, in hope that he may stumble into it. The other magic that I plan to work is through the Princess.

TUTOR. The Princess?

FAIRY. Yes—but I can't tell you . . . hush!

(*Enter the* PRINCE.)

PRINCE. Now, Madame, if you please, no more about the nose; but as you know my errand, tell me how to find the Princess Mignonne.

FAIRY. She is here.

PRINCE. Here! I thought that a magician spirited her away!

FAIRY. He did. He could not hold her, though. He used to be more powerful than I, but now he's hopelessly old-school. He's not the least progressive. He's lost ground terribly as a magician since the new ideas came in . . . something, your Highness, as a general who stuck to bows and arrows might lose ground before another armed with arquebus and culverin.

PRINCE (*who has fidgeted impatiently during the preceding speech*). The Princess Mignonne here! Oh, call her, Madame—call her!

(FAIRY *claps her hands twice. Enter the* MAID.)

FAIRY (*to the* MAID). Call the Princess. (*To the* TUTOR.) Come, sir, escort me to the garden. Let us take a turn before the sunset wholly dies.

(*Exit* FAIRY *and* TUTOR, R. *Enter* PRINCESS, L. *She comes slowly toward the* PRINCE *who advances to meet her and sinks on his knee, taking her hand. The room is by this time rather dimly lighted.*)

PRINCE. My Princess—and my Queen!

PRINCESS. My Prince! (*As he raises his head.*) But tell me why you still keep on that nose?

PRINCE (*rising*). Keep on my nose?

PRINCESS. That funny, funny nose!

PRINCE. Why . . . Mignonne . . .

PRINCESS (*gaily*). That picture that you sent me, of the masquerade—I knew it was a masquerade because you wore that nose—oh, how I laughed! But why are you still wearing it?

PRINCE. Why . . .

PRINCESS. I'd let you kiss me if you would take off that nose.

PRINCE (*impetuously, rapturously*). Darling!

(*He embraces her and evidently tries to kiss her, but the light is insufficient to reveal details. While his back is toward the audience, he detaches the false nose and conceals it, but he does not reveal the change until the end of his next speech.*)

PRINCESS. Oh, oh! Take care! That nose is knocking off my coronet! How can you kiss me with that nose!

(*Enter the* FAIRY *and the* TUTOR; *they remain standing near the entrance.*)

PRINCE (*starting back a couple of paces*). Confound the nose! Old Margot's right—it's much too long! I wish I didn't have it . . . Oh, hello—hello—what's happening?

FAIRY (*exultantly*). The spell is broken! Lights, Marie, lights! (*Enter the* MAID *swiftly with a lamp or candles; the room glows with light. The* PRINCE *is feeling his new nose with an expression of delighted surprise. The* PRINCESS *stands looking at him admiringly.*) The spell is broken!

TUTOR (*bewildered*). The spell—that nose—that nose, then, was a spell? But, sir . . . Sesostris . . . Alexander!

PRINCE. Confound Sesostris, sir, and damn your Alexander! And you can add Darius, and throw Xerxes in to make good measure! (*Holding out his hands to the* PRINCESS.) Come, Mignonne!

(*As* MIGNONNE *very slowly approaches, the* TUTOR *turns a deeply discouraged back; the* FAIRY *dabs her eyes with her handkerchief. The* MAID, *with clasped hands, gazes ecstatically at the lovers.*)

CURTAIN

GRÆLENT OF BRITTANY

A fairy play following generally the story recited in a French poem of the twelfth century, "Le Lai de Grælent," attributed to Marie de France and included in Barbazan's "Fabliaux et Contes des Poëtes François des XI^e, XII^e, XIII^e, XIV^e et XV^e Siècles." The "lai" probably draws from still older sources.

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

KING OF BRITTANY.
QUEEN OF BRITTANY.
PRIME MINISTER.
SIR GRÆLENT.
A WHITE HART.
FAIRY PRINCESS.
TWO FAIRY LADIES-IN-WAITING.
HEADSMAN.
NOBLES, KNIGHTS AND LADIES OF THE COURT.
SIR GRÆLENT'S HORSE.[1]

BEFORE THE CURTAIN

Hear ye, hear ye all, knights and gentles, lords, ladies and little ones, the strange true story of Sir Grælent and his Fairy Bride. True knight was he of the Court of Brittany, serving his King even as the Knights of the Round Table, his brothers in arms across the sea, served

[1] By a slight adaptation the HORSE may be omitted.

their King Arthur. And now he is come home from the war, wherein he conquered the enemies of the kingdom, and the King has made a great feast in his honor. Let us enter the Court with him.

ACT I

Interior of the throne-room in the Court of the KING OF BRITTANY, *in the Arthurian epoch. At the back is an arched opening into the banqueting hall, where lords and ladies are feasting. Rich curtains can be drawn across this opening when needed to screen the throne-room from the hall, as part of the Court ceremony. Down stage,* L., *the thrones of the* KING *and* QUEEN. *Rest of the stage free.*

(*Discovered:* KING *and* QUEEN *on their thrones.* PRIME MINISTER *standing near, holding a partly opened scroll. The banqueting hall, with its guests, is seen through the opening at the back. A confused noise from the feast. Many of the courtiers are grouped in the archway, back.*)

VOICES. The King! the King! Long live the King! God save the King! the King! (*Etc., ad lib.*)

KING (*rising*). My lords and knights, your loyalty to us goes hand-in-hand with all the love and faith we give to you. And now, my lords—the Queen!

(*Turns and takes her by the hand.*)

VOICES. The Queen! our gracious Queen! Long live the Queen! (*Etc.*)

(QUEEN *rises, bows, and is seated again.*)

KING (*same manner*). And next, our perfect knight,

Sir Grælent, by whose sword and great address in war we had the victory, by which the crown more firmly rests upon our brow!

VOICES. Grælent! Sir Grælent! Where is Sir Grælent? (*Etc.*)

KING. Bid him approach the throne.

(*Some of the courtiers in the doorway turn and beckon. The group parts to make a way of approach. Enter* GRÆLENT, *from the banqueting hall at the back, making his way through the group in the archway.*)

GRÆLENT. My King! My gracious Queen!

(*He makes obeisance, kneeling and kissing their hands. Rises and stands back, near* C. *stage.*)

KING. Thou hast done well!

QUEEN (*gazing at* GRÆLENT, *aside*). There is none equal to him—no, not one!

GRÆLENT. I have but carried out the royal will. No enemy can stand against our King. And in the parchment which the Premier holds (*Gesture toward the* PRIME MINISTER, *who taps the scroll and nods.*) is given by treaty to our King dominion over all the conquered lands.

QUEEN (*same business*). What grace! What music in his voice!

KING. Thou hast done well. Thou mayst retire, while I and my Lord Minister consult the scroll. (*To* MINISTER.) Read to my private ear.

(*At a sign from the* KING, *the group in the archway exeunt by that opening, and the curtains are drawn, cutting off the banqueting hall. The noise from it is no longer heard.* GRÆLENT *moves fur-*

ther to R. *stage. The* KING *and* MINISTER *appear to confer, maintaining this attitude during the ensuing scene. The* QUEEN *leaves the throne and approaches* GRÆLENT. *During her scene with him, they move slowly to and fro, occasionally passing off stage when the* KING *and* MINISTER *are speaking, and reëntering for their own lines.*)

QUEEN. Sir Grælent! And thou art my knight!

GRÆLENT. As all knights are, my Queen.

QUEEN. Thou hast a lady, though?

GRÆLENT. Nay, Madame, none.

QUEEN. What, then! A knight who bears no lady's colors? How is this?

GRÆLENT. I have not found her colors yet, my Liege. Enough for me to serve my King and Queen.

(*They move off, and the* MINISTER *is heard, reading with much manner.*)

MINISTER. "And all right, title, power, dominion, rule and majesty which heretofore to us pertained, or which by heritage or right of treaty or of conquest we did exercise, we do surrender, cede, transfer, relinquish, yield, give, grant and utterly convey" . . . Ha! that, I think, I have well put?

KING (*wearily*). Well put—well put.

MINISTER. Most aptly put! Most excellently put! Your Majesty agrees?

KING (*more wearily*). I say, it is well phrased.

MINISTER. Skilfully phrased—most admirably phrased—most—ah—er—um . . .

KING (*shortly*). Read on!

MINISTER (*hastily consulting scroll*). Yes, yes! Well, next I say . . .

(*His voice drops as he appears to read confidentially to the* KING. *Reënter* GRÆLENT *and the* QUEEN.)

GRÆLENT. I say again, Madame, thou art my Queen.

QUEEN. Yea, I am Queen; forget not, though, that I am woman, too. And dost thou find me fair?

GRÆLENT. The Queen is always fair.

QUEEN. But should I still be fair, were I not Queen?

GRÆLENT. Wert thou not Queen, yet wouldst thou still be wife.

QUEEN. And were I neither—then should I be fair?

GRÆLENT. How shall I say, seeing that thou art both?

QUEEN. Thou play'st with words, the creatures of the brain—but I would parley with thee heart to heart!

GRÆLENT. Nay, Queen, I know no play except the play with swords. My knightly oath forbids all other play.

(*They seem to continue in more earnest conversation aside, but* GRÆLENT's *voice drops as the* KING *breaks in.*)

KING. A most successful war!

MINISTER. And more successful treaty! Look, my Liege: the war was Grælent's, but the treaty, mine . . .

(*His voice dies away in closer confidential argument to the* KING *as* GRÆLENT *speaks.*)

GRÆLENT (*aloud*). And so, my Queen, so runs the knightly oath.

QUEEN. But I would have you now (*She moves closely in front of* GRÆLENT.) forget that oath—forget all else but what is in mine eyes!

GRÆLENT (*retiring slightly*). Queens may forget—and wives, too, may forget. The knight cannot forget that he is knight.

QUEEN (*with abrupt change of manner*). So! That's the answer. Look you, then, Sir Knight—for there are things that Queens do *not* forget!

(*She turns away from* GRÆLENT, *going swiftly toward the throne, on which she takes her place, tapping the floor with her foot and showing other signs of restless agitation.* GRÆLENT *starts as if to follow her, stops, turns and exits through the curtains at the back. The* QUEEN *jumps up from the throne again and stands or moves agitatedly in front of the* KING, *betraying increasing excitement of speech and gesture during the ensuing scene.*)

MINISTER. True, as youth goes, Sire, Grælent hath done well; but then, he's not alone in his well-doing. There's the treaty, too. And look you, Sire: a King might win the war and lose the peace. There's my treaty . . .

KING (*interrupting, and turning from the* MINISTER *to the* QUEEN). He hath done well! Sir Grælent hath done well!

QUEEN (*restrained at first, but gradually letting herself go*). Ay, well indeed. He hath done well—for whom? Whose is the glory—Grælent's, or the King's?

VOICES (*from the banqueting hall behind the curtain*). Grælent! All hail Grælent! Grælent!

QUEEN (*continuing*). Here in this palace, whom do men acclaim?

VOICES (*as before*). Grælent! Grælent! Grælent!

QUEEN (*continuing*). Thou seest? Thou hearest? And is it well this knight should climb so high? The

hand that firms the crown upon thy brow to-day, might itch to pluck it off to-morrow. Think well of it, my Liege, and think in time!

KING. What—Grælent? Still . . . there's something in the thought!

QUEEN. There's much, my Liege. Since, in thy graciousness, thou gav'st Sir Grælent charge of all thy purse, to pay the men-at-arms whate'er he will—are they in truth *thy* henchmen now—or *his?*

VOICES (*as before*). Grælent! Grælent!

QUEEN (*continuing*). Take back the purse a while, and let us see at whose heel they will follow!

KING. Ah! There's a plan 'twere well to think on. Better, perhaps, to clip this eagle's wing before he soar too far. What think you, my Lord Minister?

MINISTER (*suavely*). My thoughts go with your Majesty's—always!

KING. See to it, then, the Treasury is sealed. Have Grælent yield his keys. The men shall know he is no horn of plenty. They shall know it was not Grælent's bounty, but the King's. The King hath spoken!

MINISTER (*bowing deeply*). And shall be obeyed!

(*Exeunt* KING *and* QUEEN, L., *the* MINISTER *backing to the exit and bowing them through. Returns to meet* GRÆLENT *entering from the back. Enter* GRÆLENT *from banqueting hall.*)

GRÆLENT. The King is gone so soon?

MINISTER. The King is gone so soon—and yet not soon enough.

GRÆLENT. How so, not soon enough?

MINISTER. He stayed here long enough to make a bad decree, and that's too long.

GRÆLENT. A bad decree? But couldst thou not oppose?

MINISTER. Oppose? Not I! What profit to oppose? He would have changed his Minister—but not his mind. Yet 'tis a bad decree. 'Tis aimed at thee.

GRÆLENT (*incredulous*). At me! . . . Was it the King's own counsel, or the Queen's?

MINISTER. 'Twas hers at first—but he fell in with it.

GRÆLENT. So! That's the way . . . Well, out with it, old man. He takes my honors from me?

MINISTER (*ingratiatingly*). Thy *honor*—no! For no man can do that. He only takes the keys and seals the Treasury doors.

GRÆLENT. Who then will feed the troops?

MINISTER. He will, he thinks.

GRÆLENT. Not he! He does not know their needs. My men will lack for food, clothing and shelter, transport, everything. These, and the knowledge that these things are sure—these are the things that make successful war. He thinks of naught but arms. Arms—in the hands of cold and hungry men! Pah!

MINISTER. Well—there it is!

GRÆLENT. But it must not stay there! I'll spend my fortune, strip my castle bare, yea, sell this cloak and what few gems I have—go leather-jerkined like the poorest squire, but they shall have to eat, and beds, and fire! [*Exit* GRÆLENT *impetuously*, R.

MINISTER (*looking after him and shaking his head*). Poor youth! Poor fool! Yes, with his bucket he will fill the sea. He'll strip himself, and then they'll jeer at him—"the Knight in Motley." So, at one stroke, fall Grælent and the King. No beef and ale, no men-at-arms; no men-at-arms, no conquests—and no crown. Well . . . rashness befits them; 'tis the part they play. Ministers—and above all, Prime Ministers—must be more prudent. Yet were I not the Minister, I'd be the knight; his sword's his safety, and his wel-

come, too, where'er he goes. But as for kings without a crown—no, *no*, NO, *NO!* Meanwhile, the Minister is safe—and there'll be other kings. And as for this one . . . oh, let him play with women, since he knows not men!

(*Goes off slowly*, L., *muttering and shaking his head.*)

CURTAIN

END OF ACT I

ACT II

Three months later.

An open place in a forest. There is a pool or fountain up stage, L. *At the rise of the curtain and at times during the act the singing of birds is heard.*

(*Discovered: empty stage. Enter* GRÆLENT, R. *He is dressed poorly, in a leather jacket, his legs wrapped with thongs, but he still wears his sword.*)

GRÆLENT. The game's played through. I've staked my all, and lost. What's a knight's castle, when an army feeds? They ate it in a month! (*Laughs.*) Well, the poor devils, for that month at least they had their bellies full, and beds, and fire. But—knight against a queen . . . unequal play. Of course she won the game. My King's in check, and I am off the board. But now, the army'll go; her pawns swept off, her bishops and her castles, one by one . . . 'twill be not check, but checkmate for her then. . . . Stay though—the figure's mixed; two sides can't play at chess with but a single King! Perchance another

King . . . (*Breaks off, seeing the* White Hart. *Enter the* White Hart, *hesitantly.* Grælent, *excitedly.*) Hah! What's that? A milk-white hart? Here's an adventure now! (White Hart *moves fantastically about the stage, approaching, receding, but keeping near to* Grælent, *who moves after it slowly toward* l. *stage, stealing after the* White Hart.) 'Tis sure some fairy beast! I'll follow it! (*There is a mysterious noise, the sound of elfin horns, much singing of birds, an effect of shifting lights and moving vapors. The* White Hart *disappears and the* Fairy Princess *is revealed. She is supposed to be bathing in the pool or fountain. Her robe and mantle are lying on the ground or are draped on trees or bushes near her. She weaves her arms in a sort of dance, singing to herself, apparently unconscious of* Grælent. *The twittering of the birds dies away but the* Fairy *continues to dance.* Grælent, *watching from behind a foliage screen.*) What did I say? It was a fairy sign —and now—the Fairy Queen! How runs the ancient word . . . (*Recites.*)

> If you come where fairies be,
> Seek their garments, carefully;
> Steal their robes—and, good or ill,
> They will have to work your will.

And there's her gown! I'll seize it; 'tis the only way to capture her!

(*He moves cautiously toward the garments, step by step, the* Fairy Princess *remaining unaware of his presence. One of her* Ladies-in-Waiting *glides in, appears to whisper to her, and glides out again, the* Princess *looking after her and chanting.*)

FAIRY PRINCESS.

Light as the snowfall,
Soft as the dewfall,
Velvet as nightfall—
So be thy footfall!

(*She stops suddenly as* GRÆLENT *lays his hands on the garments, and turns toward him. Her two* LADIES-IN-WAITING *glide in and make as if to screen her from his gaze.*) This, then, is Grælent, that most perfect knight, now sunk as low as any common thief! He who would wear no lady's colors, steals a damsel's kirtle! Is thy need then so great, Sir Knight? If so, accept my mantle as a dole—but leave my robe, I pray!

GRÆLENT (*stopping with his hand still on the garments*). Princess, thy taunt cuts deep. 'Tis not the robe I covet, but the maid. 'Tis not these things I seek. I would but work the spell.

FAIRY PRINCESS. And how may I redeem them, then, Sir Knight?

GRÆLENT (*boldly*). With no coin known to men, oh Princess fair! But with the flashing silver of thy voice, the royal gold that glimmers in thy hair, and all the splendid jewels of thine eyes. On these high terms of ransom, take thy robe; and while thy tiring women serve thee, I will wait.

(*He takes his hands from the garments and moves back,* R. *The* PRINCESS *and her attendants exeunt,* L., *in a group. The birds sing lustily.* GRÆLENT *watches the robe and mantle as they rise and move slowly through the air after their mistress. He paces impatiently to and fro, stopping at very short intervals to gaze in the direction in which the* PRINCESS *disappeared. She reënters,* L.,

alone. Enter PRINCESS. GRÆLENT *hastens to meet her, kneels, and kisses her hand.*)

FAIRY PRINCESS. The terms, Sir Knight, are higher than thou knowest.

GRÆLENT. Princess, I make no terms. Thou hast thy robe, and all my power is gone. My case is in thy hands. All that I have, and all I am, thou seest; but as thou seest it, it is wholly thine!

FAIRY PRINCESS. They call thee bold, Sir Knight, and they do well! For didst thou know my name and lineage, thou wouldst know that "bold" is but a poor, weak word for any knight who seeks my hand.

GRÆLENT. I know no name nor lineage, Princess fair; I only know my love.

FAIRY PRINCESS. No man has ever dared address me thus.

GRÆLENT. I dare because I must. No man has ever loved as I love thee!

PRINCESS. Words, words, words, words! And what's behind the words? For dost thou think, Sir Knight, to live on words?

GRÆLENT. I do not think to live at all, Fair Maid, unless I live for thee!

FAIRY PRINCESS. And shouldst thou live for me—what then, Sir Knight?

GRÆLENT. Why, as for life, my sword shall win what future thou dost ask. And as for love, my heart shall dower thee beyond thy utmost dreams.

FAIRY PRINCESS. I can dream far, Sir Knight!

GRÆLENT. Dream far, dream deep! 'Twill not be half so far nor half so deep, dear Maid, as I can love. Dream what thou wilt; I will but love thee more!

FAIRY PRINCESS. And shall I not awaken from that dream?

GRÆLENT. Only to find the waking love more real.

FAIRY PRINCESS (*hesitating—a little anxiously*). But dost thou know that I am more than mortal?

GRÆLENT (*impetuously*). Still more—ah, still far more than mortal is my love!

FAIRY PRINCESS (*agitated*). Is this thy spell, Sir Knight—is this thy spell which seizeth me?

GRÆLENT. Nay, dear, how foolishly I spake of spells! All spells of all the magic I could weave would be as naught in contrast with the spell thy beauty lays on me. I seized thy robe; but thou hast seized my heart!

FAIRY PRINCESS (*tenderly, reaching her hands toward* GRÆLENT). And if I did . . . and if I did . . .

GRÆLENT. And if—ah, speak! And if? . . .

FAIRY PRINCESS. And if I did . . . I left mine in its stead. My heart, my hand, my love, my diadem—myself, and all the fairy hosts that follow me—are thine, my lord!

GRÆLENT (*embracing her*). My love most dear—my Princess, and my Queen! And in my heart, far more than Princess, even more than Queen—my love most dear!

(*Birds sing joyously.* GRÆLENT *and the* PRINCESS *seat themselves on a bank.*)

FAIRY PRINCESS. To think that I should wed a mortal man!

GRÆLENT. To think that I should take a fairy bride!

FAIRY PRINCESS. And I, in wedding thee, shall gain a soul.

GRÆLENT. And I, in wedding thee, gain heaven itself; for had I not the heaven of thy love, my soul would die for very heaviness.

FAIRY PRINCESS. Nay, if my love can make it light, thy soul shall dance; and if my love be music, it shall sing. And if thou have a need of any magic, thou hast but to call.

GRÆLENT. And thou wilt work it?

FAIRY PRINCESS. Try me. Make a wish!

(*The light begins to fade, as if dusk were coming on in the forest.*)

GRÆLENT. I have no further wish, since I have thee!

FAIRY PRINCESS.

Yet make a wish, my love, that thou mayst see!
Come; let us make a game of olden times
In matching wishes and at capping rhymes!

GRÆLENT.

I'd have the stars come down, that out of them
I might weave thee a shining diadem.

(*The forest twinkles with stars.* GRÆLENT *appears to gather them, and returns with a twinkling crown which he places on the* PRINCESS'S *head as he kneels before her and she bends down to kiss him. As he rises, she takes up the game.*)

FAIRY PRINCESS.

And now I'll wish—for velvet and brocade
Wherein my knight may fitly be arrayed.

(*A gorgeous cloak drops at* GRÆLENT'S *feet. The* FAIRY PRINCESS *rises and places it on his shoulders. They both remain standing.*)

GRÆLENT. I'll wish for queenly jewels for my bride!

(*A glittering studded chest appears, with strings of gems hanging out.* GRÆLENT *picks it up and offers it to the* FAIRY PRINCESS, *dropping on one knee. She takes it, kissing him again. He rises.*)

FAIRY PRINCESS.

I'll wish a charger, that my knight may ride.

(*A gaily caparisoned steed prances in and stops behind* GRÆLENT. PRINCESS, *continuing.*)

I'll wish a castle, too, where he may dwell.

(*Through a thin part of the forest background shines a splendid castle glowing on a hilltop.*)

Now lead me thither; ring the joyous bell!
Lights—lights and music! Bid the minstrels play!

(*Lights, chiming of bells, and music ad lib.* PRINCESS, *continuing.*)

Our honeymoon, a whole year and a day,
We'll spend ere I revisit Fairyland
Or thou the Court. But there is one command
That I must lay upon thy tongue and heart—
One promise thou must keep. Where'er thou art,
No mortal e'er must hear thee speak of me.
For if thou speak of me in mortal place,
Thereafter thou mayst never see my face.
Such is the Fairy law. Dost thou agree?

GRÆLENT.

Dear, whatsoe'er thou askest, I accord;
I make the vow, and swear it on my sword.

(*Lifts his sword and kisses the hilt.*)

Play, minstrels, play! Ye warders, open wide!
Cry the great feast of Grælent and his bride!

(*Lights, twinkling of the stars, music, a paean of birdsong as* Grælent *and the* Fairy Princess *exeunt, slowly,* r., *together. The horse may follow them.*)

CURTAIN

End of Act II

ACT III

A year and a day later.

Same set as Act I. *The curtain is drawn in front of the banquet hall, but sounds of revelry behind it are heard from time to time. The* Queen *is seated on her throne, resting her elbow on the arm of it, her chin in her hand. As the scene proceeds she shows signs of being ill at ease, shifting her position nervously, tracing a pattern with her finger on the throne arm, etc. The* Prime Minister *stands near her. The* King's *throne is empty.*

(*Discovered:* Queen *and* Prime Minister, *as above.*)

Queen. The King hath sent for Grælent, sayst thou? To what end?

Minister. In hope to turn the threatening tide of war.

Queen. Things go so ill?

Minister. From bad to worse.

Queen. How so?

Minister (*looking about to make sure he is not over-*

heard). The army's spiritless, the leaders weak, and split by jealousies. While one pulls this way and another that, the battle's lost.

QUEEN. And with the battle? . . .

MINISTER. Half the conquered land's no longer ours. It seems the other half is like to go.

QUEEN. And so the King . . .

MINISTER. He thinks to bring Sir Grælent back to power.

QUEEN. Over the army?

MINISTER. The army first. Who knows what else might follow?

(*He looks at the* QUEEN *meaningly. She returns his look uneasily.*)

QUEEN. He's sent for him already? When was that?

MINISTER. Two days, your Majesty, the courier's gone. He should return to-night.

QUEEN. And Grælent with him?

MINISTER. That, no man can tell. Such was the King's command; but, Madame, thou dost know . . .

QUEEN (*breaking in angrily*). I know the silly things the varlets tell! Sir Grælent's friends bring back fantastic tales of a great castle, rich with lights and song. But all my trusty spies who follow them see naught but a wild waste where the wolf howls. Have they no eyes to see?

MINISTER. Then those who saw, my Liege—were they bewitched?

QUEEN (*as if meditating*). True—there was Efflam, and that foreign knight from Arthur's court. They told the towers and the battlements—the very hangings in the banquet hall. They were not men to lie. And then my henchmen, at the selfsame spot, found nothing

but a cavern foul with bats, and rooks that flapped across a lonely sky. Someone's bewitched; but whether these or those . . .

MINISTER. Ay! These, or those? There lies the puzzlement; for if it be not those, it must be these—while if 'twere these, it cannot well be those. I have your thought, Madame?

QUEEN (*ignoring him*). One thing is sure. None hath been so bewitched as to bring word of any woman there.

MINISTER. None hath seen any woman—nay, my Liege.

QUEEN. Nor heard of one.

MINISTER. My Queen, nor heard of one.

QUEEN (*after a slight pause*). Should Grælent come . . . (*Moodily.*) I like not his return. He hath too strong an influence with the King.

MINISTER (*nodding briskly*). He *hath* too strong an influence with the King. There's danger to the kingdom in such men!

QUEEN. They talked too much apart, the King and he.

MINISTER (*craftily*). And if they talk, who knows what he might say?

QUEEN (*emphatically*). It must not be!

MINISTER (*nodding*). It must not be, indeed. Your Majesty arranged the matter once—why not again?

QUEEN. We'll think of it. But hush! Here comes the King.

MINISTER. And if your Majesty permit, I will withdraw.

(*Exit* PRIME MINISTER, *backing off stage*, R., *bowing as he goes. Enter the* KING, *from the banqueting hall. He has been drinking, and still carries a*

huge wine-cup, from which he drinks from time to time. He sinks into his throne a little unsteadily.)

KING. 'Tis a great feast, and I had great acclaim. From all the nobles, I had great acclaim.

QUEEN. And had the Queen acclaim?

KING. Why . . . had they thought that thou hadst cared . . . or had they seen thee . . . but thou seest, my dear, thou wast not there!

QUEEN (*mimicking him*). And hadst thou thought, or hadst thou cared, then hadst thou seen to it that I *should* be there! But if thy vanity be fed, then I can wait. Enough for me to know they flatter thee!

KING. Nay, now, my dear, vex not thyself—nor me! To do thee homage they are all most fain; or if they are not, then by the Holy Rood they *shall* be, and eft soon. What ho, there, stewards! Draw the tapestries that screen our audience from the banquet hall!

(*Drinks. The tapestries are drawn, revealing the feasters, who throng forward and form a group about the archway. A confused babble of voices dies down as the* PRIME MINISTER *enters. Enter* PRIME MINISTER, R.)

MINISTER. Your Majesty, Sir Grælent waits without, seeking an audience.

KING. Bid him in. . . . (GRÆLENT *enters*, R., *passing the* PRIME MINISTER *and making obeisance to the* KING, *who acknowledges it by a gesture, and to the* QUEEN, *who sits motionless.* GRÆLENT *stands back slightly, his eyes cast down, while the* QUEEN *looks fixedly at him.*) Sir Grælent . . . nay, but wait (*Drinks again.*) . . . that audience can wait. Our royal mind is othergaze enwiged . . . our roy-al mind

is oth-er-wise en-ga-ged. Ha! My lords and gentlemen, a toast! The Queen!

VOICES. The Queen! Long live the Queen!

(*Etc. The cries in response to the* KING *come from the entire group at the archway.* GRÆLENT *takes no part and does not look up.*)

KING. My dear, stand forth upon the dais there. (*The* QUEEN *rises and moves to the front of the dais or platform on which the thrones stand. She assumes a haughty air, but keeps her face toward* GRÆLENT, *whose head remains bowed.*) I bid you look, my lords. Was e'er so fair a lady sheen as see? fair . . . a la-dy . . . s-e-en as she?

VOICES (*as before*). No! No! Never! Our most beauteous Queen! (*Etc.*)

KING. Of all fair women, she is loveliest?

VOICES (*as before*). Yes! Yes! Loveliest of Queens! (*Etc.*)

KING. And thus you find her of your own free will (hic!) without ess-sception and without reserve?

VOICES (*as before*). Yes! Yes! We do! (*Etc.*)

KING (*trying to rise and bow, but finding it too difficult and sinking back into his throne again*). You see, m'love? You hear?

QUEEN (*still looking steadily at* GRÆLENT). I see and hear that Grælent hath not spoke.

KING. He hath not? Eh? By God's great halidome, I'll make him speak! (*Struggles to rise, but gives it up again.*) Sir Grælent! . . . Come you here! (*Points to spot in front of himself.*) Why is it, sirrah, that thou hast not spoke in tribute to the Queen's great loveliness?

GRÆLENT. Methinks your Majesty hath done great ill, to pose the Queen like any dancing girl. There is

no honor done to her nor thee, when men are forced to lie in praising her; for I, in sooth, know one more beauteous far, whose charms need no such tricks to bolster them!

KING (*starting forward in his throne*). What dost thou say . . .

QUEEN (*impetuously breaking in*). Let me! (*Turns to* GRÆLENT *again. The* KING *sinks back and begins to nod.*) Who is this dame?

GRÆLENT (*facing the* QUEEN). She is my . . . (*Stops suddenly.*) 'Sdeath! I had forgot! (*He turns away from the* QUEEN, *facing front and speaking as if to himself.*) I must not speak of her to mortal man. I promised, and I swore it on my sword. She said "thereafter thou mayst never see my face"—and I have spoken!

QUEEN (*her hands working in agitation*). Go on! Go on! We wait! Go on and speak!

GRÆLENT (*dully*). I may not speak, my Liege.

QUEEN. Thou'st spoke too much for one who may not speak, and not enough for one who speaks at all. Go on—or else withdraw what thou hast said!

GRÆLENT. Pardon—but neither can I do, my Liege!

QUEEN (*to* KING, *who suddenly straightens up in his chair*). And wilt thou brook such things? Command this boaster now to eat his words, or else (*Sneeringly.*) to bring this peerless lady here!

KING (*to* GRÆLENT). Bring her—recant—or pay the penalty.

GRÆLENT (*slowly, and looking into the distance instead of at the* KING). Sire, for my hasty words I dread a penalty more great than I can bear—but not of thine imposing. . . . And if I am to suffer as I fear, bring on the headsman. I would rather die than live without the thing that I have lost.

KING. Thou wilt not either bring her or recant?

GRÆLENT (*proudly, looking at the* KING). Nay, Sire, I'll join in no such puppet show, but I'll withdraw no word of praise I spoke.

KING (*to* PRIME MINISTER). Go, call the headsman.

[*Exit* PRIME MINISTER, R.

QUEEN (*agitated*). Not the headsman, Sire! The dungeon cell, that he may suffer there—perhaps repent!

GRÆLENT. A knight may choose his punishment. I choose the sword!

KING. Bring in the headsman. Let the culprit kneel. (*Enter the* HEADSMAN—*a grim figure with a huge sword. He remains standing motionless at the side of the stage.* GRÆLENT *kneels*, C. *The* QUEEN *sinks back on her throne and covers her face with her hands.*) Once more, before I give the word, Sir Knight, and this man do his office. Wilt thou offer that which will bring pardon?

GRÆLENT. I'd go through fire and flame for my offense—but 'tis no fault toward thee. And with my dying breath I'll pray for pardon, Sire—but not to thee. My dying thought is love and homage, Sire—but not for thee. And if there be remembrance after death, I'll think eternally—not, Sire, of thee!

KING (*rising to his feet, now quite sobered. To* HEADSMAN). Draw near to take thy post; and when I raise my hand, strike hard and true!

(*The* HEADSMAN *advances slowly, raising his sword as he comes. There is a strain of strange music, a wild but melodious cry. The* HEADSMAN *stops; all start and listen. Enter* FAIRY LADY-IN-WAITING, R.)

FAIRY LADY-IN-WAITING (*to* KING). My mistress,

Sire, claims royal privilege—reprieve for this Sir Græ-lent till she come.

KING (*signs to* HEADSMAN, *who slowly backs away toward and through the exit,* R.). A King cannot refuse a royal plea. But who is then thy mistress? Where is she?

FAIRY LADY-IN-WAITING. She comes, your Majesty, to give the proof Sir Grælent has refused.

(*The* QUEEN *starts up, but the* KING *puts out his hand to restrain her, and she sinks back on her throne. The* FAIRY LADY-IN-WAITING *glides back and disappears,* R. *There is another more joyous strain of music. Enter* FAIRY PRINCESS, R. *She is of course radiantly beautiful, far outshining the* QUEEN. *She stops,* R. *stage, before reaching* GRÆLENT, *whom she ignores, making a slight obeisance to the* KING *and* QUEEN. *Then she turns slowly, first to the banqueters and then to the audience, front.*)

FAIRY PRINCESS. Judge, then, your Majesty, and all ye nobles, judge if Grælent spoke not true. And if he did, then there is no offense. The King himself gave the alternative—to bring the dame, or pay the penalty. The dame is here; no penalty, then, lies. Judge ye—judge all. I claim the verdict. Judge!

KING. Princess, whoe'er thou art—if more than Princess, Queen! 'Tis no dishonor to my royal spouse that she cannot prevail 'gainst more than mortal beauty. Such, dear Queen, is thine. But mortal or immortal matters not—Sir Grælent spoke the truth, and he is free.

FAIRY PRINCESS. Your Majesty! (*With a deep obeisance to the throne.*) My lords! (*With an obei-*

sance to the group of nobles.) My mission's done. I crave your leave to go.

(*She turns and glides swiftly off stage,* R., *followed closely by* GRÆLENT. *The* KING *leaves his throne and starts in pursuit; the* QUEEN *falls in a faint. Great confusion among the nobles.*)

CURTAIN

END OF ACT III

ACT IV

Seven days later.

A fairy meadow, seen as if from just within the edge of a forest, the outer trees of which arch the nearest foreground. A tiny river crosses the meadow diagonally, winding out of sight in the background, R. *In the distance are the hills of Fairyland. The stage must be so constructed that* GRÆLENT *may appear to sink in the river when he tries to cross it.*

(*Discovered: The* FAIRY PRINCESS, *asleep on a bank of flowers,* L. *Her two* LADIES-IN-WAITING, *seated on the ground,* R., *are talking in low tones.*)

FIRST FAIRY LADY-IN-WAITING. Poor knight! I cannot put him from my thoughts. I hear him still, crying for seven days and nights across the world as he came riding after us—crying the Princess to forgive his fault. I could not do as she did—hold straight on, nor even check, nor ever turn her head!

SECOND F. L. I think 'twas hard for her. I heard her sob, and once or twice I thought . . .

(PRINCESS *stirs in her sleep.*)

First F. L. Hush! She wakens. . . . No, she slumbers on. What didst thou think?

Second F. L. I thought her on the point of softening—of turning back to him with open arms.

First F. L. I would have done so.

Second F. L. So, I know, would I. And yet she paused not until now, to-day, we have outwitted and outdistanced him.

First F. L. Why, think you, stop we here?

Second F. L. (*makes a warning gesture and steals over to make sure the* Princess *is asleep. Returns to her place*). Her heart, I think, still fights against itself. She cannot steel it yet to cross that stream. (*Looks at the river and sighs.*) This side is mortal—yon is Fairyland. No man can traverse it from here to there; and when she steps upon that farther shore, all's ended for Sir Grælent and their love.

First F. L. But why—why fight against her happiness? Why kill Sir Grælent's joy and all her own?

Second F. L. I think it is to keep the Fairy law, which she as Princess must exemplify . . . (*Starts up as if listening.*) . . . (*After a pause.*) I thought I heard a sound.

First F. L. What sound? (*Listening.*)

Second F. L. Like Grælent's voice, crying after his love. (*A very faint cry is heard.*)

First F. L. It may be but an echo in the brain, that haunts us after seven days and nights.

Second F. L. (*leaping up and looking off*, R.). It is Sir Grælent's voice! (*Turning toward the* Fairy Princess.) Princess! Sir Grælent comes!

(*Both the* Fairy Ladies-in-Waiting *hasten to the* Princess, *who rises and stands listening.*)

GRÆLENT (*off stage, but nearer*). My love! My dear love! Oh, my love most dear!

FAIRY PRINCESS (*to* SECOND FAIRY LADY-IN-WAITING, *speaking dully and with difficulty*). Lady Enora, take thy station here, while we pass over into Fairyland. See that Sir Grælent doth not try the ford. Tell him 'tis certain death. Tell him no man can compass it. Tell him . . . (*She pauses.*) he hath my heart, although our law takes me. I know not what may happen to the soul. Our Fairy law, methinks, cannot touch that. I know not when nor where the soul is freed, nor how to pass the starving of the years that lie between. . . . How gladly I'd renounce my royalty, to be a mortal maid! But tell him now . . . (*She pauses again, to command herself.*) Tell him for me now . . . my heart and soul and love will wait for him!

(*She turns away, weeping, and with the* FIRST FAIRY LADY-IN-WAITING *passes slowly off stage,* L. *Enter* GRÆLENT, *almost immediately,* R., *leading his horse.*)

GRÆLENT. The Princess . . . where is she?

SECOND F. L. She is gone, Sir Knight.

GRÆLENT. Whither?

SECOND F. L. Across the river, into Fairyland.

GRÆLENT. Show me the ford.

SECOND F. L. Thou canst not pass, Sir Knight; 'tis certain death.

GRÆLENT. 'Tis worse than death to live without her here. Show me the ford.

SECOND F. L. There is no ford. She said thou shouldst not pass. She left thee word her heart, her soul, her love were wholly thine, and she would wait . . .

GRÆLENT (*lifting his hand for silence*). Enough,

dear lady! Since her love is mine, I'll hear no other word but from her lips. I'll take the shortest road to her, or death! (*He drops his horse's bridle and plunges into the river, in which he disappears. The* SECOND FAIRY LADY-IN-WAITING *goes swiftly off by the same exit used by the* PRINCESS, *and the* PRINCESS *and her two attendants appear at once on the further bank of the river. The* PRINCESS *stoops, or kneels, and reaches out both her hands.* GRÆLENT, *reappearing, seizes them and she draws him out on the Fairy shore. He lies looking up at her as she bends over him.*) My love most dear! My Princess, and my Queen! But in my heart, far more than Princess—even more than Queen—my love most dear!

PRINCESS (*very tenderly*). My love most dear!

GRÆLENT. Thou wilt not longer urge thy Fairy law?

PRINCESS. No law, dear Knight, can hold against such love; for love, with us, itself is highest law. Thrice, for thy great love, thou hast chosen death. That triple choice cancels all penalty the law exacts.

GRÆLENT (*rising, joyous, with arms outstretched toward the* PRINCESS). And shall we then . . .

FAIRY PRINCESS (*looking up from his embrace*). Together, hand in hand, we'll roam the magic hills of Fairyland!

(*They go off slowly, whispering lovers' confidences, followed by the two* FAIRY LADIES-IN-WAITING, *while* GRÆLENT'S *horse moves restlessly to and fro along the hither bank of the Fairy river, looking after his master.*)

CURTAIN

TWILIGHT OF THE MOON

A one-act play, performed by the Threshold Players, New York, as part of a composite bill, for three weeks during the summer of 1923.

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

THE MAN.
A NURSE.
THE WIFE.
THE SPIRIT.
THE PRESENCE.

SCENE

The setting is indefinite as to time, or period. The draperies of THE NURSE *and* THE WIFE *should be simple, severe, suggesting no special epoch. The action takes place in a room in semi-darkness; the only light appears to come from a night-lamp and falls on a bed or couch, down stage,* L., *the lamp itself standing on a small table near the head of this bed. There are entrances* R. *and* L., *and one at the back on the same side as the bed. A window, back,* R., *shows a dimly moonlit sky and the silhouette of a line of hills.*

(*Discovered:* THE MAN, THE NURSE. THE MAN *is lying on the bed, motionless and apparently asleep, under a dark covering.* THE NURSE *silently arranges the articles on the bedside table. As a belfry clock strikes three, she goes to the window and looks out. Enter* THE WIFE, L. *She steals up to the bed and stands looking at the sleeper.*)

THE WIFE. There is no change?

THE NURSE. No change, since you were here. The bells have just struck three. Perhaps, at four . . .

THE WIFE. What would you say—" at four "? . . .

THE NURSE. The moon will set at four.

THE WIFE. And what of that?

THE NURSE. Why, if 'twere near the sea, 'twould be the tide—life goes and comes with the tide's ebb and flow. Here in these hills, it is the moon that draws or stays it.

THE WIFE. Nay, rather, here or elsewhere, it is God!

(THE NURSE *turns from the window and approaches the foot of the bed.*)

THE NURSE. God made the moon and tide to be His ministers and carry out His will. A change may come at four, about the sinking of the moon.

THE WIFE. In your night vigils, have you found it so?

THE NURSE. Aye, Madame, in the twilight of the moon that comes before the twilight of the dawn, I have sensed strange happenings I could not see nor hear.

THE WIFE. How, then?

THE NURSE. Why, there were voices there that made no sound, and shining presences I could not see.

THE WIFE. I think, good Nurse, that you were overwrought.

THE NURSE. Nay, Madame! When a life draws near the verge, the ministers beyond the Gate look out, and we who minister below all but discover them.

THE WIFE. You mean . . . Death's angel?

THE NURSE. Death's, or it may be, Life's. Some say they are but one. The angel bears the word to calm the soul that does not know its road.

THE WIFE (*after a pause, musingly*). Why should that be at twilight of the Moon?

THE NURSE. For then this world of ours is farthest from itself, and nearest to that other world beyond.

THE WIFE (*first leaning to look intently at the sleeper, touching the covers hesitantly and standing back again*). How glad to hear the angel whisper "Live!"

THE NURSE. Yet death may be more strangely beautiful.

THE WIFE (*agitatedly*). For those who die, perhaps . . . but what of us, before that vision comes? We only know the heart-break and the terror. Oh, Nurse, I dread the hour! He is so weak—so frail!

THE NURSE. Nay, Madame, there is none too weak to live if God ordains it, nor none too strong to die if God would summon him.

(THE WIFE *draws still nearer to the head of the bed and stands looking intently at the sleeper.*)

THE WIFE. But there has been no sign of any kind? Nothing has happened, Nurse, at all to-night?

THE NURSE. Nothing—except he murmured once or twice.

THE WIFE. What did he say? Could you hear what he said?

THE NURSE. Yes—twice, he whispered "Mary"!

THE WIFE. His first wife's name! Why did he whisper that?

THE NURSE. A dream; 'twas surely nothing but a dream. Some wandering of the fever in his brain.

THE WIFE. You're sure that's all? You do not think he saw . . . he cannot be so near that he could see, or she could know, and come to meet him?

THE NURSE. No, Madame! Nothing but a dream! Fever always does strange things. Be sure 'twas but a dream! And now, 'twere better you should go and rest. Your heart is far from strong.

THE WIFE. Ah, well, my heart! But then, it flutters so to-night I cannot rest. I'd rather be alone. Go, you, and get some sleep, if only half an hour. I'd rather be alone. I'll call you before four.

THE NURSE. Madame, if you command it, just a while I'll go. But I'll be close at hand; and at the slightest change, call me at once.

THE WIFE. Go. I will call, if there be any need. (*Exit* NURSE, *slowly and as if reluctantly*, L. THE WIFE *goes hesitantly to the window, and looks out as if fearing and yet unable to resist. She stands gazing sometimes at the sinking moon and sometimes at the bed.*) 'Twill soon be down . . . and then, she said, a change may come. I wish she had not said it! Just an old wives' tale . . . and yet I wish she had not said it! The change may be all wonderful, but still I dread the hour. I seem to feel some strange power drawing now—something that drags me, like an undertow around my heart. And I must fight for both! (*She returns rapidly and falls on her knees beside the bed, with her arms stretched across it and her hands clasped. The light coming through the window begins to fade.*) See, dearest, I am holding you so close my very being meshes you around as with a net—a net of love, to hold you here. My heart shall beat for both, my breath shall buoy you up until the tide of life sets in again! (*Her head sinks as she clasps the sleeper still more closely. The moonlight wanes rapidly until the window is almost dark. A gauze curtain is interposed, making the whole scene misty and unreal. Enter* THE PRESENCE, *at the back, as a shadowy figure.* THE

WIFE *lifts her head, discovers* THE PRESENCE, *rises, and moves swiftly as if to interpose between it and the bed.*) What is this place, and what is happening? The room has suddenly grown strange!

THE PRESENCE. This is the twilight between life and death, that lies beyond the sinking of the moon.

THE WIFE. But you are not the Nurse! I thought I called her!

THE PRESENCE. A veil is drawn between you and the world, through which she cannot pass.

THE WIFE. Who are you then? What is your name, and why are you come here?

THE PRESENCE. I am the summoner of souls, and therefore am I come.

THE WIFE. The summoner of souls! (THE WIFE *recoils, terrified, covering her face with her arms. Enter* THE SPIRIT, R., *dimly revealed.* THE SPIRIT *moves two or three paces toward* THE PRESENCE, *who stops its advance by a slight gesture. The light is then withdrawn from both these figures so that they are lost to view in the deep shadow up stage.* THE WIFE *looks up again.*) I have been dreaming! . . . There is nothing there!

THE SPIRIT (*speaking unseen in the darkness*). Lord, hear me now! For being of the Kingdom of the Dead, I am thy child far more than she who lives. I am his first wife, and this night the third time I have come at twilight of the moon, waiting for thee.

THE WIFE (*lifting her head*). What is that other voice I seem to hear, like weeping in the night, but cannot tell the words?

THE SPIRIT. Lord, summon now his soul to thee and me! We have been so long sundered! But I was the first, and shall be his again at last when he has crossed the borderland. Lord, he is mine!

THE MAN (*stirring slightly*). Mary!

THE WIFE (*clasping him closely*). Oh, love! my love! not her name, dear—not that! See—it is I, thy wife . . . I who have filled thy life and understood as no one else! Not even death could separate us now! See, dearest—there is no one here but me!

THE SPIRIT. Lord, though she see me not, his soul already knows and strives to reach me.

THE PRESENCE. Peace, child; it is not time.

THE WIFE. Again that sound, like voices on the wind! And now again I feel that dread compelling, like an undertow. My strength seems slipping from me in great weariness—yet must I hold him fast with love and prayer!

THE SPIRIT. Are not the years enough, but must I wait still on and on, and wander in my loneliness?

THE WIFE (*kneeling erect, with arms thrown out*). For all the work that he has planned to do—for all the joy that he has yet to win—for all the love that I have still to give—Lord of the dead and living, spare him!

(*She drops forward, burying her face in her arms.*)

THE SPIRIT. Look, Lord of the Waiting Dead—look what will yet remain to make her glad—the son whom she has borne him, while I . . . I never had a child!

THE PRESENCE. Peace, daughter! What I come to do, ye neither understand; for while I hold the thread of every life, it is Another bids me spare or sever them. So shall the pattern that the Master weaves be plain at last, though now the skein seem blind. Thou knowest, daughter, I can do naught else but work his will!

(*During the preceding speech the figures of* THE PRESENCE *and* THE SPIRIT *are gradually revealed*

—that of THE SPIRIT *dimly, that of* THE PRESENCE *more clearly, so that it becomes quite distinct. Toward the end of the speech* THE SPIRIT *fades into the darkness. Exit* THE SPIRIT. THE WIFE *slowly lifts her head, as if dazed.*)

THE WIFE. That dream again . . . and through the dream, a sound like falling water, or the words of distant singing carried by the wind. But now, the wrestling tide with which I strove moves softly languorous as a sunlit stream!

(*She rises, slowly, discovering* THE PRESENCE, *who very gently stretches both arms toward her.*)

THE PRESENCE. Fear not, my child! Nay, child—there is no fear!

THE WIFE. And now, I see . . . ah!

(*She sinks gradually to her knees, and falls forward with her face buried in the coverings of the couch.* THE PRESENCE *fades into the darkness, and exit. The gauze curtain or veil is withdrawn, and a gray light of dawn shows in the window and lightens the room. The clock in the belfry is heard striking four. Enter* THE NURSE, *hastily,* L.)

THE NURSE. I have been haunted by strange dreams, and now the dawn is come. She should have called me.

THE MAN (*stirring*). Who is there?

THE NURSE. Sir, it is I, the nurse. (*She places her hand on his forehead.*) Now, all the saints be praised! Your fever is gone!

THE MAN. I feel a blessed coolness in my veins, and strength steals through me like the sap in spring. Where is my wife?

THE NURSE. Madame! (*She looks at the kneeling figure.*) Your wife is fallen asleep, weary with watching.

THE MAN. Poor child! I had strange visions in the night, and just before you came, I thought I heard a voice that called to her.

THE NURSE (*alarmed*). A voice that called to her?

(*She moves swiftly over and touches* THE WIFE, *who slips gently to the floor. As* THE NURSE *bends down and lays her hand on* THE WIFE'S *heart,* THE MAN *struggles up, affrighted.*)

THE MAN. What is it, Nurse? Speak! Has she fainted?

(THE NURSE, *quickly interposing as if to screen from view what has happened, reaches one hand back in a gesture of restraining her patient. With the other she furtively crosses herself, as she rises, keeping her gaze fixed on* THE WIFE'S *lifeless form.*)

THE NURSE (*aside, almost involuntarily*). Mary, Mother of God!

CURTAIN

A WOOING

A one-act play suggested in part by an old Basque folksong.

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

THE SEIGNEUR.
MISTRESS MARIE, *his daughter.*
DON RICO, } *Marie's suitors.*
EL TROUBADOUR, }
OLD MAN.
YOUTH.
GUESTS, ATTENDANTS, ETC. (NOTE. The purpose of these is merely to enrich the stage picture and to reflect and intensify the word-pictures painted by the suitors.)

SCENE

A severe but fine late mediaeval interior. Hangings, rich but dim, to relieve bareness without focussing the eye or the attention. A dais, with chairs for the SEIGNEUR *and* MISTRESS MARIE, *and in front of it chairs for the suitors. Unobtrusive high-backed benches, or stalls, for the few guests. No other furnishings.*

(*Discovered: The* OLD MAN *and the* YOUTH, *surveying the arrangements.*)

YOUTH. That is a strange idea the Seigneur has—that Mistress Marie's suitors woo her here!

OLD MAN (*crisply*). In open court.

YOUTH (*with some indignation*). In open court. *I* never courted so!

OLD MAN (*disgustedly*). Nor did I play the fool to get my wife. 'Tis a fantastic way!

YOUTH. Were I the maid, I would not have it so.

OLD MAN. Were I the Seigneur, I'd not have it so! I'd wed her to the Don in double-quick, and pack that dreamy singer by the door!

YOUTH (*seeming to be following his own thoughts rather than listening to the* OLD MAN, *and speaking with a sort of embarrassed eagerness*). It was a summer night—a night of stars; and in the shadows underneath the limes . . .

(*He approaches the* OLD MAN *as if to continue in a confidential tone, but the elder starts away at the sound of approaching footsteps, and both fall back. Enter the* SEIGNEUR, MISTRESS MARIE, *and the two suitors, followed by guests and retainers. They group themselves in their places. The* OLD MAN *and the* YOUTH *remain standing, the former near the chair of* DON RICO, *the latter near that of* EL TROUBADOUR. *The retainers stand behind the group of guests. The* SEIGNEUR *stands until all others are seated, and during his first lines to* DON RICO.)

SEIGNEUR. Pardon, Don Rico, if I stayed your words a moment since. I planned but this more ample audience here, where we may view the matter leisurely. Now, sir, (*Bowing.*) to you. (*Sits.*)

DON RICO (*importantly*). 'Tis large enough, my lord—and you, Madame—and you, good sirs and ladies—large enough!

EL TROUBADOUR. Pardon—we speak here, as I take it, sir, of love—our love for Mistress Marie?

DON RICO. I speak, good sir, of dower. I speak of what I offer with my hand.

(*Appears to consult a small tablet dangling from his waist.*)

OLD MAN (*aside, to* YOUTH). Ay! That's how he should speak!

YOUTH (*same manner*). He should, methinks, speak rather of the heart!

DON RICO (*dropping the tablet*). I am a plain man, sir—and you, Madame. I do not go by any four roads roundabout. I go direct. First, then, my house. 'Tis grand as a château. I do not like your rambling, vine-clad walls. I cut away the trees, with all their litter, and built it square, out in the open ground.

(*He steps nearer* C. *stage, and makes slight gestures, as if tracing an imaginary plan on the ground before him.*)

YOUTH (*aside, to* OLD MAN). No place for birds to nest!

OLD MAN (*same manner*). No place for nonsense there!

DON RICO (*accompanying his words with broad descriptive gestures, as if depicting the scene before his audience on the stage, who respond by attitude and expression as if they visualized it*). Look, Madame: here's a plain, and here's the road—no silly, winding track; it runs straight through, as far as you can see. And here's the great gate, three yards high, forged of iron bars and latticed well —— Madame! (*To* MISTRESS MARIE, *whose thought seems to have carried her to something far out of the picture.*) I said—here is the gate . . .

MISTRESS MARIE (*recalling her attention hastily*). Through which one passes to the house.

DON RICO (*pompously*). Through which one does not pass so fast as that, Madame, unless one be the owner—or his spouse. No. The gates are closed. There is a clatter as the coach pulls up. Down jumps postillion, rings the postern bell, parleys a moment with the groom who answers. Then comes the warder, jingling his keys. And you should see his livery, Madame!

OLD MAN (*excitedly*). Gold-laced, I'll warrant you!

DON RICO. Gold-laced, on red and yellow.

OLD MAN (*with rising excitement, and suitable pantomime*). And he'll know how to turn a key, I'll warrant you! No silly fumbling with the lock for him! *Clank!* goes the bolt; the two great gates go *clang!* Up jumps the smart postillion—*crack!* go the whips. The coach rolls through—and there the warder stands, backed by respectful grooms, bowing you in!

DON RICO (*who has followed the* OLD MAN'S *outburst with approving nods*). So! Now, here's the wide, straight drive. And here's the house, set four-square to the drive and to the sun—the doorway thus, the windows right and left—all new and shining. And here you have the gardens round about.

MISTRESS MARIE. Gardens of roses?

DON RICO. Cabbages, Madame; beans and artichokes. There's no one buying roses. And from the windows you can see it all—the peasants working there, your maids within. 'Tis all before your eyes, under your tongue and hand. If any churl or wench neglects the task, you have them, without stirring from your seat.

MISTRESS MARIE. There are no trees?

DON RICO. Ah! I was just about to come to that. I left some pines (the land there was not good). 'Tis

great for larks! You set a mirror—so—and work it with a string. It flashes in the sun. The larks drop down, in little flocks, attracted by the glitter. Piff! with another string—the net falls over them—lark pie for dinner! There's a sport for you!

(*Chuckles. Looks around for approval, and catches the eye of the* OLD MAN, *who grins sympathetically.*)

YOUTH (*aside*). Nets—for the birds that sing!

DON RICO (*with the air of getting back to business*). But, Madame, we dismount. The housekeeper with all the maids is curtseying in the hall. Here's the great salon, done in six different colored marbles, costly carpeted, windows with purple hangings, chairs for a company all around the walls. There's the dining-hall, in mauve and crimson, with the huge table fit to seat a score, carved in rococo ornament and striped with gold. Next the kitchens; twenty bedchambers, rooms for linen, plate—the scullery, the servants' lodgings—all that heart could ask. And you shall sit there on a golden chair, giving your orders, counting napery, with none to waste your time in idle words.

MISTRESS MARIE. But tell me more about the countryside.

DON RICO. The countryside? There's naught of interest in the countryside. But wait! I'll tell you of a country that's worth while—the hills of Comberouge!

MISTRESS MARIE (*hopefully*). Hills!

DON RICO. Ay—grazing hills. I have ten thousand sheep; that's Item Two. Ten thousand, with their shepherds, roving there.

OLD MAN (*eagerly*). The hills of Comberouge?

DON RICO. You know that land, old man?

OLD MAN. As one born there! See . . . (*He*

points as if the country were actually before him.) there they flock, like sheep themselves—low, brown-backed, endless, rounded hump on hump and curve on curve, against a sunburnt sky. And then, between those giant flocks at rest, a cloud of dust . . . something that moves—comes toward us—widens . . . a jostling mass that parts and closes, stops but to start again, wanders here and there in minor streams that weave and separate and join once more . . . a myriad bleating, cries of the herders, barking of the dogs . . . thousands of trampling feet . . . the reek . . . the woolly backs' unrhythmic rise and fall . . . and then the multitudinous noise and shouting die away, and the dust settles slowly on the dusty slope.

Don Rico. Five hundred fleeces there, if there was one! And I have twenty such—ten thousand sheep, with shepherds tending them. That's Item Two.

(*He consults his tablet again.*)

Youth (*aside*). Faugh! I smell them still!

Old Man (*aside*). And do you hear the clink of gold those fleeces buy?

Don Rico. Now, as to Item Three. Ah! hills again, Madame. You seem to have some fancy for the hills. Well, in the Catalonian mountains now I have a hundred mules, laden with silver money, every one, hitherward-bound, for dowry.

Old Man (*same manner as before*). One rarely sees a convoy such as that, but I have seen them in those very hills, sectioned in groups for safety, traversing some high ridge against the dawn. First comes a scout or two; then the men-at-arms, riding close abreast; then the burdened beasts—plod, plod, plod, plod, with shouts and jingling bells and cracking of the whips. After

that, the cross-bow men, with level sunlight flashing on their armor; lastly, the fodder train. Every man alert, not knowing what attack may lurk among the rocks nor ambush lie behind a sudden turn. You lose them round the shoulder of a hill—there they emerge again; they pick their way across a dizzy scarp—slide on their haunches down a shingly slope—reform, and disappear in some dark gorge.

YOUTH (*aloud, drawing a deep breath*). There's danger there, but there is romance, too!

DON RICO. Romance? 'Tis solid fact! And as for danger—pshaw! My fellows know their work. I have lost men, of course, but never a doubloon. However . . . (*To the* SEIGNEUR.) Sir, that's neither here nor there. (*Consults his tablet.*) I think that's everything I have to say.

SEIGNEUR. We thank you, sir. (*To* MARIE.) I speak, my child, for you? (MISTRESS MARIE *bows.* SEIGNEUR, *to* EL TROUBADOUR.) And are you ready, now, Sir Knight, to speak?

(EL TROUBADOUR *begins to speak slowly, as if looking into his own thoughts and step by step, half unconsciously, putting into words what he sees there. As he proceeds, in this and his following speeches, certain couples among the listeners draw closer together in lover-like manner, seeming to be wrapt in the emotions his words arouse.* MISTRESS MARIE *listens with increasing absorption. The* SEIGNEUR'S *eyes rest part of the time on her, part on* EL TROUBADOUR, *part on the distance as if following his own reveries.* DON RICO *looks blank or bored, and may show his disapproval by slight gesture, such as tapping his knee; but there must be nothing on the stage to disturb concentration on*

the TROUBADOUR'S *lines or to conflict with their spirit.*)

EL TROUBADOUR. I do not know what dwelling I shall find—but there will be great hills enfolding it, and it will look upon the stars and on the sea . . . and every room will be alight with love. And there will be a quiet music thereabout . . . the singing of a little stream, or of the wind, or of the long waves cradling on the shore . . . and beauty in the windows and the doors, like some rare color through which all must pass and be suffused that enters in. From every wall will breathe the jasmine and the rose; the thrush and nightingale will harbor there, and for the golden fragrance pay in silver song. And from your casement you shall look on trees that flow up from the ground to reach the sky as rivers flow from sources toward the sea—on trees that spread their branches to the light and catch the flying breezes in their hands. And you may wander wide on little roads that track the sunshine patterns in the woods, or thread the mighty moors of rosy heather and of golden gorse; and when the lark springs up before your feet, there will be naught to stop him or his song below the dome of heaven. Or if you choose to bide at home, you shall have daffodils to dance for you, poppies and gillyflowers, while the contented bees go in and out. And you shall look upon the sunset and the dawn, follow the marching clouds, watch for the rising planets and the setting moon. Your windows shall be gateways to the Pleiades, although you never leave your seat. And when you turn from them, there will be happy firelight playing on the walls, and long, dear talk of love and life and all great things.

YOUTH. We have a rose-tree and a jasmine vine, and

gillyflowers on the garden wall, and we can see the wild-fowl cross the sky.

Don Rico. Tame fowl are better worth your while, young man, and crops that work for you are higher value than the flowers that dance! (*To* El Troubadour, *sourly.*) Your pardon, sir!

Seigneur (*courteously, to* El Troubadour, *who since his last lines has stood momentarily lost in thought*). Pray, sir, proceed.

El Troubadour. I have good store of books, my lady dear, books that are as the souls of mighty men; poets and sages, warriors and kings—the splendor and the glory, the beauty and the music of the world. Books of far lands and books of mystery; books that relive the life of olden days, revealing visions of enchanted things. The men who wrote them loved the thing they did, and left an essence of their spirit there. And in the evening, while the tapers burn, we will go forth with Charlemagne to war, gather the lotus buds along the Nile, or rove with fairies, dancing round the world.

Mistress Marie. Should we see the fairies?

El Troudadour. When we learn the spell.

Youth (*eagerly*). We saw them, she and I, that night beneath the limes. There was a pool of moonlight in the midst—as it were so—(*Indicating.*) with shadows all about; and suddenly, as if upon a word, they all came trooping, light as gossamer, robed in pale colors, dancing in the moon. They were so light they hardly touched the ground, weaving in couples, in and out and in, waving their arms the while they danced to magic melodies on elfin horns.

Mistress Marie. You say they came "as if upon a word." Did you hear that word, or do you know it?

El Troubadour. Dear lady, every lover knows the word, and every loved one hears it.

YOUTH (*excitedly*). Ah! That was why they came! for I had just been telling her my love, when . . .

(*He breaks off in confusion.*)

DON RICO (*impatiently, to* EL TROUBADOUR). Good sir—(*More respectfully to* MISTRESS MARIE.) Madame! We are spending time. (*To* EL TROUBADOUR *again.*) You've named, I take it, Items One and Two: your "dwelling," as you vision it, against my house, your books against my sheep. Have you an Item Three?

EL TROUBADOUR (*speaking directly to* MISTRESS MARIE, *without noticing* DON RICO). Deep down in the recesses of my heart there are a hundred songs, my lady dear, freighted with love and beauty and delight—with love, delight and beauty, since they are of you. And as they come, they shall pour out for you measures of melody inexhaustible, and men shall make them current through the world, prizing them far above their simple worth because of your dear image stamped thereon. They shall be treasured in the courts of kings, and noble ladies shall essay to pattern by the maid they celebrate. But most and oftenest shall they honor you throughout that fine companionship of folk who fashion rare and splendid things. You shall be made the theme of pictures and of tapestries, lovely companion there of saints and queens. You shall be enshrined in bronze and marble and in goldsmith work; and for a thousand years legend shall live and blossom, minstrelsy shall flower, about the Lady of a Hundred Songs. Such is the power, dear maid, of noble loveliness when sung by noble love.

DON RICO. And is that all?

EL TROUBADOUR. Nay, sir, it is not all. These are but votive offerings; worship itself is more—far more. These are but candles, lighted at a shrine to which my

heart and life are wholly consecrate. But—you will pardon me—one does not cry aloud to all the world prayers that are very passions of his soul. What else I have to say, (*Turning to the* SEIGNEUR.) sir, I crave your leave to say to Mistress Marie afterward—if what I have already said should win from her that boon.

DON RICO (*suspiciously*). It is no secret gift of jewels you would make?

EL TROUBADOUR (*emphatically*). You, sir, at least, I swear would not esteem them so.

DON RICO. Then let the Seigneur . . . (*Perfunctorily and indifferently, as a sort of afterthought.*) and the maid . . . decide.

SEIGNEUR. My daughter, sir, shall answer for herself. Her mother (*He makes an almost imperceptible pause, crossing himself.*) did so; and for our child she had this pledge from me. (*Seeing* DON RICO's *evident disapproval.*) It may not be your fashion, sir, but it is ours.

DON RICO (*still showing vexation, and addressing* MISTRESS MARIE *somewhat unwillingly*). Well, then, Madame, it seems the case is plain. No lady mistress of my bed and board could fail to see the splendor of my dower, matched with his.

MISTRESS MARIE (*with a slight confusion at first, but ending firmly*). I thank you, sir. I cannot go with you.

DON RICO (*aghast*). Not go with me? But think of my château!

MISTRESS MARIE. I heard, sir, all you said of your château—of your ten thousand sheep with shepherds tending them, and of your convoy of a hundred mules laden with silver money. Not for all of these, Don Rico, can I go with you.

DON RICO (*making a bustling business of tucking*

away his tablet, etc., and speaking angrily to the SEIGNEUR). Marry your daughter to the King of France, or to the King of Spain, if t'other will not do! And if an Emperor be not enough for her, then let her suffer for her love!

(DON RICO *flounces out, the* OLD MAN *hurrying beside him and apparently whispering sympathetically and indignantly in his ear.* MISTRESS MARIE *looks after him, smiling sadly, but turns with a sort of tender embarrassment toward* EL TROUBADOUR *when he speaks.*)

EL TROUBADOUR (*hesitantly, as one who has much at stake, but holding himself very erect*). Fair Mistress Marie . . . if I dare to speak . . .

MISTRESS MARIE (*looking down, softly*). The summer night is all alight with stars. Walk with me, dear Sir Knight, beneath the limes, and tell me there . . .

EL TROUBADOUR (*eagerly, almost incredulously*). Tell you, dear maid?

MISTRESS MARIE (*looking up at him, tenderly*). Tell me those words to which the fairies come!

(*The* TROUBADOUR *springs forward and sinks on his knee in front of* MISTRESS MARIE, *who gives him her hand, at the same time reaching the other hand back to her father. The knight raises his lady's hand reverently to his lips, then rises, drawing her arm through his, and moves slowly toward the exit, the other couples following some distance behind. The* SEIGNEUR *stands watching them.*)

CURTAIN

THE END

822 Date Due G561

11-10	JUN 16 '38		
MAR 4	~~MAY 30~~ '39		
JUL 28	APR 04 2002		
JUL 28			
MAY 12			
FEB 11			
MAR 1			
APR 21 '41			
OCT 21 '52			

34157 Storage 822.08 G561f

PELLETIER LIBRARY, ALLEGHENY COLLEGE
822.08 G561f AVLL
Going, Charles Buxt/Folklore and fairy p
WITHDRAWN
3 3768 00129 3888